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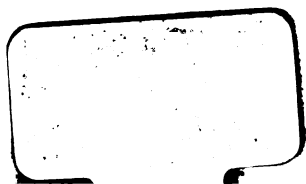
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RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

W. ADAMSON.



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THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

VIEWED IN ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS.

BY
WILLIAM ADAMSON,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

GLASGOW: T. ADAMSON, 165 COWCADDENS STREET.

EDINBURGH: J. MENZIES & CO., HANOVER STREET.

1870.

101. f. 272

GLASGOW : PRINTED BY HAY NISBET, TRONGATE.

P R E F A C E .

THE best defence which can be set forth for the divinity of Christianity, in these days of doubt and denial, is an exposition of its fundamental doctrines. External evidence has its use and sphere, but its power to convince is largely borrowed from the nature of what is to be proved. The historical arguments for the life, miracles, words, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, are conclusive, and yet their power over many minds is not great. And they never will be effectual for the end desired until they are associated with a somewhat comprehensive and harmonious expiscation of the nature and relations of the facts proved.

Every effort, therefore, honestly and reverently made for the elucidation of Christian doctrine, should be encouraged by all lovers of the Bible and the Gospel. The feeblest may be of service to the cause of truth. Under this conviction we issue the following essay on a subject which lies near the foundation of a sound evangelical theology. The views advocated are those which

after years of careful study, have approved themselves to the writer's mind as in harmony with the Word of God and with Christian experience. They were not hastily adopted. They have been calmly considered in the light of the inspired volume, and the teachings of the master-minds of the Christian Church. They are not new views but old views. They have been received in all ages as true by theologians of all sections of the household of God. And we are especially delighted that we have been able to quote so largely from Dr. Martin Luther in support of the doctrine of righteousness advocated. Of all theologians who have ever lived there are few from whose works profounder and more scriptural ideas of the essence of the gospel can be obtained. This is the reason why we have enriched our pages with so many gems from this mine of spiritual wealth. There are others we are indebted to for aid in this and other directions to whom our gratitude is too great for words.

The essay now presented to our readers was, in the substance of it, prepared about four years ago, and read to a Pastoral Association in the north. This will account partly for its didactic style, and the brief treatment of certain important aspects of the subject. It was originally written more to suggest than exhaust the various

topics introduced, that they might be discussed by the brethren assembled. And it has been published at the request of many who heard it read in its original form, with the view of directing attention to what is believed to be fundamental in the Christian system.

The subject has recently been brought before the public by men who occupy very different standpoints. The Rev. John Forbes, LL.D., has an essay on it in his recent work published two years ago, "*Analytical Commentary on the Romans*," which contains in every particular the doctrine which we have endeavoured to expound. So much do we agree that unconsciously to one another we use in many cases not only the same arguments but also almost the same words. We have incorporated a few quotations from Dr. Forbes's volume in our essay, which will be read with interest. The Rev. Joseph T. Goodsir in his work, "*The Patristic and Scriptural Doctrine of Salvation*," has considered the subject, but with his ideas we do not agree. His fundamental doctrine is, that salvation and justification are commensurate, and that the latter must consequently be partly ethical. His works, however, though prolix in some parts, deserve more attention than they have received. Matthew Arnold, in his essay on "*Paul and Protestantism*," has also discussed the doctrine of righteousness, but with

little success. His proclivities are too anti-evangelical for him to understand the theology of the apostle as contained in his epistles. At the same time his words cannot be passed by without consideration, because they have a weighty influence with many inquiring minds.

When thought is being directed to the subject, we have ventured, with much diffidence and knowledge of its imperfection, to issue this small treatise on "The Righteousness of God," with the hope that it may aid some reader to realise more perfectly that the Christian system is true, and that the gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation.

EDINBURGH, *April*, 1870

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“THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.”

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

EVERY careful reader of the Bible must have observed that there are many phrases used by the inspired penmen, key-phrases, so to speak, which, when understood, open up the meaning of whole sections of the Sacred Scriptures. These are peculiarly pregnant expressions, and gather up in themselves much truth of a doctrinal import. Like suns, they shed light on affiliated subjects of lesser importance, and bind them together into a harmonious system. One of these is the phrase, “The Righteousness of God.”

This phrase occurs frequently both in the Old and New Testaments. To those who employed it originally, it had a deep and precious significance. In their thought it was the “one thing” which men, in all lands, require. Saints long to understand and possess this blessing. Sinners stand in need of it as a refuge in which

they can rest their weary souls. And many, in all degrees of moral development, have found "The Righteousness of God" to be to them what it was to the great German Reformer, "the real gate of Paradise." Through it they passed by faith, and entered into the blessedness of those who are members of the kingdom of heaven.

The word "Righteousness," and the phrase, "The Righteousness of God," and their synonyms are found throughout the entire Bible. Noah was "*A preacher of righteousness.*" (2 Peter ii. 5.) Abraham "*believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.*" (Genesis xv. 6.) All through the Songs of Zion there are many references to this righteousness. "*Lead me,*" says the Psalmist, "*O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies.*" (Ps. v. 8.) "*He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,*" he declares, "*shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*" (Ps. xxiv. 4, 5.) And in prayer David lifted up his desires and said, "*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness.*" (Ps. xxxi. 1.) The prophets also speak of righteousness, and the righteousness of God with an emphasis which suggests that they thought that nothing was to man of greater value. It is in the New Testament, however, in harmony with the progressive nature of divine revelation, that we find the most explicit reference to this important theological phrase. Jesus spoke of it in the sermon on the Mount when he exhorted the people, saying unto them, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and*

his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) With the Apostle Paul it was a favourite expression, and he uses it as of moment in his epistles, especially in those which he addressed to the Christians at Rome and Philippi. Paul, in speaking of "*The gospel of Christ*," says, that it "*is the power of God unto salvation.*" "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.*" (Rom. i. 16, 17.) It is manifested without the law, "*being witnessed by the law and the prophets*," (Rom. iii. 21)—"*declared by Jesus as propitiatory*"—(Rom. iii. 25), and is—"*through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 9.) Peter (2 Peter i. 1,) and his brother apostle James (James i. 20) both speak of this righteousness, though, as we shall afterwards see, in different relations. These references to what the Bible saith will suffice meantime. They are adduced here only to indicate, that we are fully warranted in asserting that this is a Biblical phrase of no secondary importance, and that underlying the words there must be a thought which is worth more than silver and gold. By understanding it we shall be enabled to apprehend with more clearness our relations to God and his relations to us in Christ Jesus. The horizon of our knowledge will be extended, and more light will flood our minds.

The phrase "*The Righteousness of God*," as it occurs in the Scriptures, has not been uniformly understood by theologians. Many, very many, different opinions have been entertained as to its meaning. In all ages

of the Church, able divines, learned theologians, and pious men have differed as to its precise import. Before the Reformation, the Christian scientific mind had not been specially directed to those doctrines which have to do, more particularly, with the redeeming work of Christ, as the ground of the sinner's pardon and acceptance. Other doctrines were discussed, examined, and settled. The nature of the Mediator and the nature and condition of man occupied the attention of the theologians of antiquity more than the subject under consideration.* It seems that it was not necessary, for the life and service of the ante-reformation Church, that its members should understand, as fully as we do, the doctrines of justification, atonement, and righteousness. They believed that God could save, and they knew experimentally that by faith in the gospel they were spiritually changed; but the *how* or the *why* did not enter, to any great extent, into their minds as questions requiring solution. They ate the bread of life without knowing its properties, and were strengthened. They drank of the water of life without defining its nature, and their soul's thirst was assuaged. They believed in Him who was the life of the world, and

* "While the doctrines of Theology and Anthropology received a considerably full development during the Patristic and Scholastic periods, it was reserved for the Protestant Church and modern theological mind to bring the doctrines of Soteriology to a correspondent degree of expression."—Shedd's History of Christian Doctrine, vol. ii. p. 204.

though they understood not what that life was, or how it entered into their spirits, they nevertheless possessed it, and that was enough. But with the dawn of the Reformation, this state of matters was considerably changed. The Church of Rome and of Christendom had become corrupt to the core. The vital element of the Christian system was smothered under a load of man-imposed duties, errors, and human traditions. The whole plan of salvation, as revealed in the Book of God, was inverted, and must needs be set on its right foundation if the gospel was to hold a place in the earth. Luther consequently had to go to the very marrow of evangelical truth. With his strong arm he had to sweep away the rubbish which had accumulated, for centuries, round the door of the temple of saving knowledge, and prevented all ingress, that he might, for himself and others, reach its most sacred shrine. He had to ask and answer the questions, What is the gospel? How is the sinner to be saved? What is the righteousness of God which constitutes the gospel the power of God unto salvation?*

* "The proper kernel of the Reformation is still the *doctrine of justification*,—in other words, the conviction that the only ground of salvation is laid by Christ in the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins, that the sole means of appropriating this free love of God is living faith, and that this faith naturally produces a new life of devotedness to him. Many, as, for instance, the *Waldenses* and *Wickliffe*, and quite recently *Goch* and *Wesel*, had enunciated the formal positive principle of the Reformation, viz., the reference of all doctrines and institutions to the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate rule of Christianity.

agonise in soul, till he accomplished his task ; and by his efforts light and liberty were shed abroad over Europe, and a new era in the onward course of Christianity began.

Since Luther's day, the phrase, "The Righteousness of God," has engaged more or less the attention of all sacred students and intelligent readers of the inspired volume. Some maintain that it has three distinct meanings in the Bible. It signifies, they say, (1) the righteousness which God possesses as a perfect moral being—his attribute of righteousness; (2) the righteousness which he prescribes in the law; and (3) the righteousness which he has provided in Jesus Christ. Dr. Hodge says, "The three most important interpretations are the following : According to the first, it means the justice, rectitude, or mercy of God; according to the second, it means God's method of justification; and according to the third and most common, that righteousness which God bestows and which is acceptable in his sight." * Others look upon the phrase as having in the Bible but one meaning. They contend that it signifies always and everywhere in the Scriptures one and the same thing, though presented in various aspects and relations, and it ever means the righteousness of God in its simplest and

But the material positive principle, the article of *justification and salvation by faith* alone, had not been so strongly, luminously, and fully declared as by Luther and his compeers."—"Ullman's Reformers," vol. ii. pp. 460-1.

* Commentary on Romans, p. 32.

strictest signification. "All righteousness is of God," remarks Dr. John Forbes. "There is therefore but one righteousness, and that 'the righteousness of God,' whether exhibited by God himself, by Jesus Christ, or by believers in Christ."* Thus, on the one hand, some theologians hold that divine righteousness is diverse in its nature, and is not the same in God, Jesus Christ, and the upright, moral creature. It differs, they say, in its essence, and is produced by those to whom it belongs. On the other hand, others believe that the righteousness of God is essentially a unity, and that it belongs to God, and by him is given to all those who possess it. He is its source, its supreme possessor, and all those in whose spirits it is found receive it from him as the earth derives its light from the centre of the solar system.

From these observations, it will be seen that our inquiry is one of considerable difficulty. It has its dangers as well. When learned Christian men differ regarding the meaning of a Bible declaration, it must be no easy task to determine what we ought to hold and what we ought to reject. We require here, if anywhere, the spirit of little children. The attitude of the boy Samuel when he said, "*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*" (1 Sam. iii. 9), should be ours, as we examine the theological import of the words, which all confess are profound as they are far-reaching. In this spirit let both writer and reader proceed.

* "Analytical Commentary on Romans," p. 144.

CHAPTER II.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN GOD.

ALL who acknowledge the Christian's God believe that he is righteous, and that he is righteous because he possesses righteousness. It is his in all its plenitude and purity, as the Perfect One, and because of it he is most glorious in character. So far there is no difficulty, and perfect agreement; but when we attempt to grapple with the question, What is this righteousness which is the peculiar glory of the Lord? difficulty is experienced and difference of opinion begins.

We are helped but a very little way towards the truth by an examination of the etymological meaning of the Greek word used by the sacred writers of the New Testament, and which is translated by the English word righteousness. Olshausen says "that the root of *δικαιος* (righteous), *δικαιοσύνη* (righteousness), and all expressions connected with it, is the word *δίκη*, whose original meaning, as we learn from Timæus in his *Lexicon* to Plato, is 'manner and way, right relation.' This term came to be principally applied in common language to relations of law; and *δίκη* therefore denoted

the right relation between guilt and punishment, between merit and reward.”* It will be evident at a glance that the righteousness of God, viewed subjectively, must transcend that which has relation simply to the meting out of the due reward to those who do good, and punishment to those who do wrong. It must be so, for this among other reasons—God was eternally the possessor of righteousness. He was ever in the past, as he must always be in the future, the righteous Jehovah. His righteousness is as eternal and as independent of all law and legal relation as his own being. This becomes apparent when we go away back in thought to the period when there was no time as succession. The beginning mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis and of John’s Gospel had not yet arrived. There were then no men, no earth, no sun to shine, and no planets to revolve round it in their spheres. Orion and the Pleiades had no existence, nor had the Creator scattered abroad the seeming star-dust of the Milky Way. There was not in immensity any material object, nor was there a devil to rebel nor an angel to worship and adore. At this period

“All the ages, and all suns and worlds,
And souls of men and angels, lay in Him
Like unborn forests in an acorn cup.”

They had, however, no existence in fact; for then God existed alone, and there was no thing nor being other

* “Commentary on the Romans,” p. 133. (Clark’s Translation.)

than Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There being no creatures to govern, there could be no government, and no law as law. The idea of right, it is true, shone as brightly then in the uncreated reason as it does now. And God's nature, so to speak, was a law to itself; but law *as law*—the authoritative declaration of the right, with appropriate sanctions—had in eternity no existence. Righteousness, however, was in existence in eternity. It belonged to God. It is as everlasting as himself, and its existence is independent of law as law, and of acts of will, even of the divine will. It cannot therefore be the result of obedience to law to any degree, nor can it be in the order of nature subsequent to the outgoings of God's will in harmony with the idea of right. God's inherent righteousness is not produced by acts of will; but it has ever given moral character to all that the divine will has done. And if we resolve it into its fundamental principle, we shall discover that it consists in the moral condition of God, which is antecedent to all law and acts of will; but which, when tested by the idea of right, is found to be in harmony therewith. It is the love of which John speaks in his first Epistle that gives character to all the righteous acts and holy words by which God has blessed the moral creation he has called into being. In the words of Dr. James Morison, "God's righteousness, as realised in God, is that principle in his infinitely perfect moral character which manifests its existence and energy in an undeviating regulation of all his voluntary acts, immanent and

transient, by the idea of right. It is obvious," he adds, "that there is such a principle or element in the divine moral character; and it complexions with its own peculiarity and radiance all the relations in which God stands to his moral creatures."* As an element or principle it gives, if we may be pardoned the expression, *tone*, moral tone, to all the attributes of God. It is in the heart, sanctifies the thought, gives purity to the will, and flows from the supreme conscience—the chief moral element of the divine nature. Thus righteousness belongeth to the Lord, and as the hosts of heaven contemplate its manifestations, they are led with awe and reverence to veil their faces and their feet with their wings, and to cry one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.

On this element of the divine moral character the whole moral universe reposes. All its inhabitants may have the faith that inspired the patriarch Abraham when he said, "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" (Gen. xviii. 25.) Righteousness, divine and eternal, is the root and foundation of the supreme moral government. Because it is possessed in perfection, God is the true Sovereign who has an absolute right to do his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. It regulated his counsel when, in eternity, he decreed his transient actions and the principles by which his relations

* "Critical Exposition of Romans iii.," p. 320.

to his responsible creatures would be governed. The whole constitution of things has been built up in harmony with its requirements. And heaven and earth were brought forth as the theatre on which it might be manifested to those able to understand it. All the thoughts, feelings, and actions of God have ever been in exactest accordance with the demands of righteousness. Hence, he is holy in all his ways, and could never sanction, not to say ordain, or appoint, the smallest infraction of his perfect law. Moral evil *is* moral evil because it is the contradiction of his will, and is for ever opposed to his nature, character, wish, and commandment. Sin cannot dwell with him; for he loathes it with a perfect loathing. In proportion as he possesses righteousness, so must he be *against* all iniquity. Against it, in all its forms, he sets his face, and in God moral evil will ever find its chief antagonist. He has determined to put it down, and his righteousness is a pledge that the resources of infinite wisdom, truth, and love will be used for this purpose.

At the same time, this glorious element of character will ever lead its possessor to seek its reproduction in all moral creatures who have it not. God's love, as a Father's love, yearns over the wayward and the sinful, and seeks to restore them to their standing in the heavenly family. It prompts the divine action to go forth to seek and recover. But so does the divine righteousness. It is a motive to the divine will, and moves the arm which is stretched out for salvation; for

the righteous God loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and is sincere in his desire that righteousness should rule in the heart of universal man. And this it shall one day do, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and righteousness is the foundation of his throne. He will rule till all opposition be put down, and till liberty, right, and religion fill every heart. Towards this glorious consummation the race is ever pressing. Through troubles, tears, and struggle, it ever moves forward, and heights of civilization and moral grandeur are now occupied, which are nearer the source of blessedness than the low levels of the past. The good time shall come, for the mouth of the Lord hath said, *"As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth: so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations."* (Is. lxi. 11.)

CHAPTER III.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN MORAL CREATURES.

HAVING in the previous chapter briefly indicated the nature of the righteousness of God subjectively considered, we pass on to notice that all created moral beings ought to possess this righteousness. In it they should find their standing, and by it all their acts, thoughts, and feelings should be inspired. We pause not, meantime, to answer the pertinent question which might be raised at this point, viz., How can created moral beings possess, as an inner experience, the righteousness in virtue of which God himself is righteous? An answer to this will be given further on. Meanwhile we must explain and defend our proposition. That God desires that all his moral creatures should be like himself in that which constitutes the chief excellency of his character, will be acknowledged by all. For this end he called them into being, and made them in his own likeness—after his own image. They are not made as representations of the archetypal ideas which have had their home eternally in the infinite thought of God, but they are made as images of himself. Angels

and men, as they come from the hand of the Creator, are in miniature what he is in absolute perfection, and one end of their existence is, that they may reflect his moral character as the drop of dew on the flower reflects the radiance of the rising sun. God's life should be their life; God's thoughts should be their thoughts; God's love should be their love. And the desire of the Heavenly Father's heart is, that they should, at all times, possess the righteousness which adorns his character, that it may adorn theirs. This is the divine desire regarding those strong sons of God who excel in strength, and who obey, without the slightest deviation, the holy will of their King. It is satisfied in the case of the cherubim and seraphim who serve in the palace of the Majesty on high, and who worship in lowliness and love in the spiritual temple of the upper world. They are radiant without, within, and around. Light, moral uncreated light, surrounds and penetrates their entire natures. In the midst of this light they walk and hold communion with God and his glorious Son, through the Holy Ghost.

Angels and archangels are righteous, and righteous because they have voluntarily received and made their own by obedience the righteousness which God gives to all those who will receive it. Out of his own fulness he imparts it to his true children, and by his Spirit it is sustained. In no other way could angels ever come to possess righteousness of character. It could not be produced by their own efforts or created by the acts of their own free wills. Nor could it spring from the holy, just, and good law

given to them, either simply as known, or as known and obeyed. Righteousness, as the soil out of which righteous action can alone spring, must have been antecedent to the commandment and all authoritative declarations of the right. At the same time it is, and ever must be, in perfect accordance with the highest conception of the right and the good. The true son is he who has the filial spirit regnant in his whole being. He delights to do his father's will because he loves his father and has a deep longing to let that love find expression. The act of obedience does not produce the love, though it may deepen and strengthen it, but is only a manifestation of that which previously existed. The child who is a real child obeys because he loves, and does not love because he obeys. This obedience is the outgoing of his love. Even so with the pure and holy angels of God. They are righteous and good, not because they obey law and do good; but they, like God, act righteously and do good because they are righteous by possessing righteousness, and are good by having goodness. Goodness or righteousness in them is not difficult of exercise, but is perfectly spontaneous. All acts of a moral character spring from it as their source, and are complexioned by it. And this principle, which gives moral character to all acts, comes from God, and is received, not by deeds of law, but through faith in their Father and their God. These bright spirits can say, "O thou great and only good One, all the springs of our being and well-being are in thee. Our light and love, our joy and peace,

"our righteousness and spiritual life are gifts from thy hand. Thou hast not asked us to produce these blessings, but only to receive them from thy fatherly love. This we have done, and now they are ours in thee. We are nothing, and can do no good apart from thy Spirit. And we appear in the presence of thy glory, not in our own righteousness, which is the result of obedience to law, but our standing in thy sight is found in the righteousness which we have received by faith in thy holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, and which we work out in obeying thy holy will." After this manner they can trace all that they have to the Father of lights and the giver of every good and perfect gift. In his righteousness they are exalted, and it is in them the root of their moral life. They work out what God by his Spirit works in. Eternal life is theirs, and is developed in deeds of service and acts of love. Their personal holiness is but the fruitage of the root-principle which they have received from God. For they are not fountains of righteousness, but cisterns into which, through faith, flow continually those streams of life, light, and love which come from the ever full and overflowing heart of Jehovah.

This righteousness of God, man, as a race, ought to have possessed. Adam had it so long as he trusted God, and he ought ever to have cherished it as the chief good. We do not object to the language of the creeds, rightly understood, when they affirm that our first parent possessed an original righteousness which he lost

by the fall, a righteousness which was imparted to him at his creation, when the living Spirit breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul.* To suppose that no such righteous principle was imparted to him, would be to suppose that God launched him upon the tempestuous sea of life without that which was most essential to his safety. An earthly father does not think that he fulfils his duty, if he sends his offspring into the active business of the present life without having equipped them with the principles necessary to their future success. He not only toils hard in many cases to provide them with all the material comforts which they need, such as food, clothing, and shelter, but he is above all careful that they receive such a godly upbringing and education as will make them strong mentally and morally. For this end they are trained under masters who attend to the cultivation and development of their understandings, and they are placed under those who are able to instil into their youthful minds those principles of morality and religion which are necessary to an upright moral character. Now if all this, and far more, be done by earthly parents for their children, God

* We would distinguish between original *righteousness* and *holiness*. Adam was not originally holy. He was originally innocent, that is, free from all moral taint, but he was not holy. He had, however, righteousness at the moment of his creation as a spiritual element imparted by the Spirit of God, which, if made his own by faith and obedience, would have constituted him a holy person. In this sense he possessed original righteousness.

could not send his first human son into the world without those moral principles which are necessary for his well-being. If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more will our Heavenly Father bless those whom he sends into the testing school of moral probation? All things requisite for obedience and growth in knowledge will be furnished, and the vital element of a holy character will not be wanting. This Adam had granted to him when he came from the hand of his Creator. He had a body which was fearfully and wonderfully made, harmonious in all its parts, and animated by life suited to its nature. In the material organism the spirit dwelt, and was furnished with the powers of thought and volition, and the susceptibility of emotion. Through the conscience, which is the still small voice of God in the human soul, there was imparted the righteousness necessary to personal obedience and spiritual progress. This was not legal, nor was its source and centre in law. It sprung not from works, but was appropriated and retained by faith in God as his Father and Holy Friend, and manifested in obedience. Its principal element consisted in love to the right, true, and good, as found in or declared by God. Hence Adam in his innocency loved the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength. He consciously depended on God as a child depends upon his parents. His meat and drink was to do the will of his Father in heaven. His righteousness was, in a word, not of his own creation, it was spiritual and divine,

and secured, so long as it was possessed, the perfect fulfilment of the law's every precept. By yielding to its power our original father would have been affiliated more and still more to the Divine Heart; and, as his capacities expanded, he would have received a larger measure of the Divine life, which would have beautified and sublimed his character, and been to him a source of perennial joy.

How dependent, then, are all created moral beings on the Divine Arm and Heart! Angels, archangels, and innocent man had all needed blessings and possible graces, but they could ask each other even as we can, "*What hast thou that thou didst not receive?*" (1 Cor. iv 5.) And the only answer in harmony with the truth is —NOTHING. All good is God's, and what of it is possible to the creature, must come from the exhaustless fulness of the Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD LOST BY MAN.

OUR first parents did not long enjoy the paradisial state in which God placed them. How long, the Bible sayeth not, nor can tradition or reason tell. From the sacred record we can learn but little of what they experienced during the period that succeeded their creation and preceded their fall. What we can gather, suggests to us that they walked the shady bowers with unclouded minds and joyous hearts, and could feel that all around and above was theirs to appreciate and enjoy, because their Father made it all. That they had communion with nature and each other of a deep and sacred kind is certain. To their eyes every flower contained "thoughts too deep for tears," and every bird and animal revealed the mind and heart of the Creator. But they were privileged with greater blessings than these. They could not only look out and around, but in a spiritual sense they could look *up* and see the glory of their Maker, and talk with the "voice of the Lord" as he walked in the cool of the day in Eden. Rapture beyond our poor thought must have been theirs, and

deep peace must have kept their hearts and minds. They were innocent, loving, and righteous, and all of heaven and God they could receive was poured into them. But!—O that fatal but!—the serpent came and arrested the attention of Eve. She stood, heard, answered, looked, desired, stretched forth the hand, and took the forbidden fruit, and gave to her husband; and he did eat. And on that instant the whole scene was changed. Heaven gave place to hell, happiness to remorse, peace to shame, life to death, and righteousness to sin.

The first human sin is worthy of study, and it throws no inconsiderable light on the subject of this essay. Adam, as we have seen, was created with all things necessary for the development of a pure and upright character. He had within him, by the presence of the Holy Ghost, the righteousness of God, which by faith he should have retained, and from which all his acts should have sprung. But he was under no necessity to do so. Adam was like God, in that he was a free-will being, and, as such, he was free to stand and free to fall, free to retain and make his own the righteousness of God, or to reject the gracious boon. To test his moral standing, God took him out of the cold region in which he was created, and placed him in the garden to keep and dress it. When in the garden, there was given unto him an external commandment to the effect that he was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day he would eat of it he

should die. This Edenic law had reference only to the outer act of taking the forbidden fruit; but the first sin must have lain deeper, and must have preceded the movement of the arm. The first sin, like all other sins, had its origin in the soul. It consisted fundamentally of the act of the will, by which the head of the race refused to yield to the spirit of righteousness which was in him, and obeyed the spirit of evil instilled by the old serpent the devil. God was dethroned in the heart and Satan was enthroned before the outer act was performed, and it was this inner state that gave the outer deed its sinful character and dread significance. Hence Adam lost the righteousness of God before he partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, though he had not broken the Edenic law before he did so. The moment he lost faith in God, shutting out his righteousness, and acquiesced in the insinuated thoughts of the evil one, on that instant he lost the life of God in his soul, and from the condition thereby produced the factual sin sprung. This is the fall of man. He fell from a high and holy position and experience to an estate of sin and misery. He fell from his consciously realised sonship to the condition of a slave, from spontaneous goodness to indwelling sin. From his experience, perfect love to God, confidence in his rightful King, and faith in his Heavenly Father departed. Adam, as a good tree, with the sap of the divine life in his every fibre, brought forth good fruit; but when the tree became bad by the resistance of the creature

will to the divine will, the fruit could no longer be good. In this way sin entered into the world, and the ruin of man was accomplished. By voluntarily resisting, he lost the righteousness of God and his standing in the family of heaven. He became thenceforth a wandering prodigal, held under the law which says, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" (Ezekiel xviii. 4.) Condemnation rested on the guilty one, and the evil *virus* of sin polluted the once holy temple. The favour and friendship of God were lost. Helpless and hopeless he became, and by no effort or work of his own could he regain the standing and the paradise he had by iniquity forfeited.

What is true of the first man is true also of all men. "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" (Rom. iii. 23.) "*There is not a just man on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.*" (Ecc. vii. 20.) The facts of experience and observation abundantly corroborate the declarations of the Bible regarding the universality of human sin. As a sinner, man is without strength to rectify his own relations to God, to the law, and the universe of moral beings; and he is helpless in the direction of producing that righteousness which is well-pleasing to God. A legal righteousness is perchance possible to him: "*touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*" (Phil. iii. 6.) But the righteousness of God's children is not within his own power. This is not to be wrought out by deeds of law, but is a state of mind preceding all works which

God will accept. And this state of the inner life man cannot produce, any more than he can give life to a dead body. All those expressions, therefore, of the sacred writers which assert and imply that man as a sinner is dead, condemned, without strength, without hope, wretched, and miserable, are to be received in their fullest acceptation. They are true descriptions of the spiritual state of man as a sinner. This was acknowledged even by some of the profound thinkers of antiquity, who were not blessed with the verbal revelation. They were conscious of the disease that preyed with deadly effect on the race, and of their utter incapacity to cure it. The more spiritual of their number looked for a supernatural power to impart the inner strength needed to raise and elevate them to a sound moral and religious condition.* To do this was beyond the reach of the wisdom of this world and the doings of man, no matter how philosophic and good. And what are these deliverances on the part of the heathen sages but a

* "What, in fact, would not have been the joy of a Socrates and a Plato if they had found the human race in the arms of Christianity? How happy would Plato—who was evidently embarrassed between his beautiful doctrines and the religion of his times, who managed so carefully with that religion, even when he avoided it, who was forced to take from it the best possible part in order to aid a favourable interpretation of his doctrine—have been if he had had to do with a religion which presents to man as at once its author and its model, the sublime and mild Crucified, of whom he had an extraordinary presentiment, whom he almost described in the person of a just man dying on the cross."—"Cousin's True, Beautiful, and Good," p. 397:

confession, though in a different form, of what Paul declares—“*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” (Rom. iii. 20.) “*If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*” (Gal. iii. 21.) But such a law was not given, and could not have been given. No law could give to man a true internal life from which all goodness would spontaneously proceed, and, without this, true righteousness would be impossible. And so would the fulfilment of its own spirit. The law demands perfect love to God, and condemns all those who have it not ; but it cannot grant that which it demands. It has no power to do so, “*in that it is weak through the flesh.*” (Rom. viii. 3.) So that instead of aiding the soul under its power to regain the state of blessedness from which Adam and universal humanity have fallen, the law is a barrier in the way. When it comes in all its power it fills the sinful soul with perturbation and alarm, but not with light and love. Its thunders awake the conscience, its commands give the knowledge of sin, its purity reveals the darkness and chaos which reign within, and its penalty kindles the fires of coming wrath. He who knows most of it, without knowing more, is ready to exclaim with the apostle of the Gentiles—“*O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?*” (Rom. vii. 24.) “The law,” observes Luther, “shutteth man under sin, not only civilly, but also spiritually; that is to say, the law is also a spiritual

prison, and a very hell. For when it revealeth sin, threateneth death, and the eternal wrath of God, a man cannot avoid it, nor find any comfort. For it is not in the power of man to shake off those horrible terrors which the law stirreth up in the conscience, or any other anguish or bitterness of spirit. Hereof come those lamentable complaints of saints which are everywhere in the Psalms—‘*In hell, who shall confess thee?*’ (Ps. vi. 5.) For then is a man shut up in prison, out of the which he cannot escape, nor seeth how he may be delivered out of these bonds—that is to say, these horrible terrors.”* If therefore there were no help from on high—no other way by which the sinner could come to possess the righteousness without which he cannot become a reconciled son of God—death must be his for ever, and his dwelling must be far from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

* Commentary on Galatians. Duncan’s Edition, p. 303.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BROUGHT NIGH TO SINFUL MAN.

MAN in his passage through this world to his home in heaven has fallen among thieves, who have bruised, stripped, and cast him down, and have left him all but dead. Our design is not to excuse the sin of man when we so represent his moral history. The facts of the case warrant us so to speak. For we cannot understand aright that history without remembering that sin did not originate with the human race. Its author was no member of our family. He belonged to another order of beings, and was lying crouching for his prey when the Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to keep and dress it. It was the old serpent the Devil and Satan who seduced man and led him astray. By his wily arts he secured man's ruin. By means of his temptation Adam was led to swerve in his allegiance to God and sinned, and by sin he came under the condemnation of the law, which awards to the transgressor eternal death. There man lies before us, as the wounded man in the parable—helpless,

hopeless, and miserable. The crown has fallen from off his brow. The sceptre has turned into ashes in his hand, and his kingdom has departed. He is shut out from heaven, mocked by the tempter, and lashed by his own conscience. And his agony is intensified by the consciousness that he had the power and *ought* to have obeyed God rather than Satan, and that his former condition was as high and glorious as his present one is low and wretched. There he lies without life, without hope, without love, and without righteousness. Will he remain in this state of darkness and death for ever? Will the temple lie in ruins through all the future, and tell to those who survey its dilapidated walls, its broken columns, and desecrated altar, the awful nature of departing from God? Hark! A voice which seems to come from afar, so gentle and musical are its tones, but which proceeds from the heart and lips of Him who is not far from every one of us. Its articulate utterance is—“*Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.*” (Job xxxiii. 24.) “*Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness, saith the Lord, I BRING NEAR MY RIGHTEOUSNESS; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.*” (Isaiah xli. 12, 13.) This declaration is the burden of the message which the Bible contains. It is the glad tidings of great joy which is to all people. It is the sum and substance of the gospel of God—the truth which makes free, and on which the hopes of the race repose.

This heavenly message is echoed and re-echoed in one form or another by all the inspired penmen. Paul especially dwells on it with fondest regard. To the Romans he declares—“*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*” (Rom. i. 16, 17.) “*But now,*” says the same apostle, “*the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*” (Rom. iii. 21, 22.) We are further assured that God “*hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” (2 Cor. v. 21.) These statements prove most clearly that God has brought nigh what man had lost, and brought it near to man in his own Son. In all these passages, and others of a like import, the same righteousness essentially is referred to. It is admitted, indeed, that it is not always presented in the same aspect and relations by the Bible writers. Sometimes it is spoken of as it is subjective in God. At other times it is represented as it is, or should be, realised subjectively by man. And anon, and most frequently as it is found in Jesus, revealed, declared, manifested, brought nigh and available to the unrighteous and ungodly by faith. But in all these aspects and manifestations it is the same generic righteousness—the

righteousness which is possessed as his own by God alone, declared in his holy, just, and good law, revealed by Jesus, and given to others as a gift of his love. There appears to us no reason, exegetical or theological, why it should be contended that there are three or even two kinds of divine righteousness mentioned in the volume of the Book. God does not prescribe in his law a righteousness which he does not possess; nor does he provide for others a righteousness which is not personally his own. That which Luther as a sinner contemplated in the law, and which shook him to the depths of his nature, is the same righteousness which is revealed in the gospel, by which afterwards he was raised, emancipated, and saved. That which thunders forth its commands from Sinai differs not in essence from that which speaks in tones of mercy from Calvary. The aspects, manifestations, and relations vary, but the thing itself is ever the same. As revealed in the law, the righteousness of God condemns the sinner, and can only visit him with the punishment which is his due. It wears in this relation the aspect of wrath—“*The righteous judgment of God.*” (Rom. ii. 5.) But, as declared by Jesus, it seeks the restoration of the erring, and yearns to find its home once more in his heart. In the former case it is the righteous “*wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*” (Rom. i. 18); and in the latter it is revealed in “*the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation.*” (Rom. i. 16.) As a saving power, and

the ground of human salvation, it is gloriously and graciously manifested by Jesus in all that he did, said, and endured when among men. By his incarnation, work, and death, he brought it nigh to those who had it not. He made it available for human sinners, and if accepted by them, it stands in the room of their own perfect possession of a perfect divine righteousness.

A great deal of unnecessary discussion has taken place as to what has been called the active and passive righteousness of Christ. The distinction, in our opinion, is not real, and has tended rather to confuse than to enlighten simple-minded Christians. Righteousness in Jesus was ever an active principle, and in the working out of the atonement for human sin was never simply passive. He revealed it in his doing and enduring, in his fulfilling the commands of the law, in being obedient unto death, and in bearing the curse. But the righteousness is to be distinguished from the doing and the suffering, though it enters into both, as much as the life is to be distinguished from the fruit of the tree. The righteousness of God was the sap of the true vine—the spiritual life of the man Christ Jesus, as it had been a principle of the character of the Divine Jesus eternally. Because he possessed this righteousness without measure, he was enabled to bear the load of a world's sin, and to bear it away without being borne down by it, and thereby to meet in our room and stead all the claims of law and justice. In this way Christ declared the righteousness

of God, so that God "*might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*" (Rom. iii. 26.)

Luther presents the relation which the righteousness of God in Jesus sustained in the working out of the atonement thus: "Not only," says he, "my sins and thine, but also the sins of the whole world, either past, present, or to come, take hold upon him, go about to condemn him, and do indeed condemn him. But because, in the self-same person, which is of the highest, the greatest, and the only sinner, there is also an everlasting and invincible righteousness; therefore, these two do encounter together the highest, the greatest, and the only sin, and the highest, the greatest, and the only righteousness. Here one of them must needs be overcome and give place to the other, seeing they fight together with so great force and power. The sin, therefore, of the whole world cometh upon righteousness with all might and main. In this combat, what is done? Righteousness is everlasting, immortal, and invincible. Sin also is a most mighty and cruel tyrant, ruling and reigning over the whole world, subduing and bringing all men into bondage. To conclude; sin is a mighty and a strong god, which devoureth all mankind, learned, unlearned, holy, mighty, and wise men. This tyrant, I say, fieth upon Christ, and will needs swallow him up as he doth all other. But he seeth not that he is a person of invincible and everlasting righteousness. Therefore, in this combat sin must needs be vanquished and killed, and righteousness must overcome, live, and reign. So in Christ all sin

is vanquished, killed, and buried, and righteousness remaineth a conqueror and reigneth for ever." Profound deliverance ! and one which throws more light on the nature of the atonement than many volumes.

O that men would gaze upon this righteous Saviour, as he walked the earth bearing the burden of a world's transgression, and consider the main-spring of all that he did, and the spirit in which he endured all his sorrow. If they would look into His holy heart they would see, indeed, that it was the abode of sins not his own, but they would also see that it was the abode of righteousness which was not produced by obedience to law, though it was manifested by the perfect obedience of his sinless life, but was inwrought by the Holy Ghost, and was of God. It was God's, because it was the same as that possessed eternally by Jehovah. It was from God, because it was by the Divine Spirit which was given to him without measure that it was imparted. And it was manifested in the likeness of sinful flesh that unrighteous man might be possessor of it by faith, and in it be exalted to the glorious inheritance of the saints in light. In this way Christ has come to seek and to save, and the duty and privilege of every one is to seek "*to win Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 7.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THE SINNER'S BY FAITH.

THE law of God, as we have seen, demands from all the subjects of Divine Government perfect love. It does not, however, give them the power to obey its precepts, and we cannot understand how it could. The law insists on obedience, but it does not impart the spirit out of which a true obedience can alone spring. By the way of law, consequently, the human sinner can never reach righteousness which would serve either as the ground of justification, or as a subjective meetness for heaven's employments and enjoyments. The function of law in respect to such is that of a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, who has brought nigh for man's reception the righteousness of God lost by sin. Jesus has become—"The Lord our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) We may become the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. v. 21), and "*be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 9.) The believer receives through Jesus that which he cannot produce, and in which he may be raised to a higher

position than that from which, by actual transgression, he has fallen.

I may here be asked in what sense can the righteousness of God, manifested by Christ, become the believer's? How may it become ours? The common answer given by Protestant theologians is, that the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to the sinner who believes the gospel, in the sense that he receives the reward which the righteous Jesus deserves. According to Hengstenberg: "Righteousness, whenever it is referred to, not as a subjective attribute, but as a gift of God, always denotes the same thing, from a positive side, as the forgiveness of sins from a negative. The latter implies that God, through his free grace, treats man no longer as a sinner; the former that he regards him as actually righteous, from which it necessarily follows, that he treats him as a righteous man."* Richard Rawlin states the matter thus: "God mercifully and graciously imputes and reckons it to the soul in believing, and so we come, according to the tenor of the constitution of the new covenant, to have a real and pleadable interest in it. Not that he reckons we wrought it out in our own persons, so that the individual obedience and sufferings of Christ are judged to be our obedience and sufferings; this destroys the imputation of that which is done by another for us, and is not according to the judgment of truth; but the meaning is, that he graciously accepts it for our pardon and justification as if we had personally wrought it out ourselves."†

* Christology, vol. iii. p. P13. † Merchant's Lecture, pp. 69, 70.

Once more, in the language of Dr. Archibald Hodge: "The rewardableness attaching to Christ's righteousness is actually credited to the believer, and rewarded in the whole process of his salvation." * The doctrine, as thus defined, has been declared to be the article of a standing or falling church. And so we firmly hold it to be. Those who deny or set aside this doctrine, we are more and more convinced, have lost the most powerful and conscience-satisfying element of evangelical truth. They have broken the sword placed in their hands by the Holy Ghost, so that they will not be able to kill. They have cast away the balm of Gilead, given them by the Great Physician, so that they will be unable to make alive again. God can be satisfied with nothing but perfection; and our consciences, as the Divine voice in us, reflect the mind of God in this matter. They, too, demand a perfect righteousness. This we have not of our own personally; it can be found in Christ alone. "Hence," observes Luther, "Christian righteousness consisteth in these two things, namely, in faith which giveth glory unto God, and in God's imputation; for faith is weak (as I have said), and therefore God's imputation must needs be joined withall; that is to say, that God will not lay to our charge the remnant of sin; that he will not punish it, nor condemn us for it, but will cover it, and will freely forgive it as though it were nothing at all; not for our sake, neither for our worthiness and work, but for Jesus Christ in whom we believe."

* The Atonement, p. 210.

And herein there is reconciliation between God and the believing human soul. God looks on Jesus the Saviour and on man through him, and is well pleased. Man, with the eye of faith looks on Jesus and on the Father, as seen in his Son, and is satisfied. The unrighteous one is reckoned as if he were the righteous Jesus, and all that belongs to the Son of God comes to be his. With him he died on the cross, with him he was buried in the new tomb, with him he was raised from the dead, with him he ascended on high, with him he will reign till his enemies become his foot-stool, and with him he is constituted a joint-heir of God—of the inheritance which shall never pass away.

We must therefore cling tenaciously to the grand Protestant doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as the ground of the sinner's justification in the sight of God and his own conscience. At the same time, it appears to us that, important though it be, it does not contain the *whole* truth. So far as it goes, and it goes a great way, it is a doctrine which is in full harmony with Bible statements and Christian experience; but, as above stated, it contains only one element of the truth. It leaves out another element which, though not the most important, is nevertheless of unspeakable importance, and which is, that not only does God impute or reckon the righteousness of Christ to all who believe, but he also bestows upon all such the same precious blessing. It becomes objectively and forensically the believer's by imputation, and becomes subjectively and ethically his

by reception. The believer has faith *in it* as the sole objective ground of his justification, and it is *in his faith* as the subjective root of his spiritual life. God thus graciously *imputes* and *imparts* his own righteousness, which is in Jesus Christ, to all those who believe in his name. We are *in Christ* by faith, and all that he has is ours, and he is *in us* to subdue all things in the inner kingdom of the mind to himself, that he may be all and in all. He is *for us* as the sole reason of our salvation, and it is through his blood that we have redemption, even the remission of sins. And he is *in us* as the power of an endless life, by means of which we may fulfil the righteousness of the law, and with the filial feelings of little children, call God, Abba, Father.

That the righteousness of God in Christ becomes subjectively the believer's, the moment he sets to his seal that God is true, is proved by many passages of Scripture, and is opposed by none. Paul teaches the doctrine when he declares that "*The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.*" (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Here we learn—(1) That the power of God in the gospel is his own righteousness, which is in Christ Jesus. (2) This power operates unto salvation in the experience of all those who believe. (3) From the fact that the gospel is a power in the soul to salvation, which includes eternal life as well as justification, it necessarily follows that the saved soul appropriates the revealed righteousness both forensically and ethically.

The same idea runs through the words of the apostle in the third chapter of the same epistle, and in the section of the third chapter to the Philippians, from the sixth to the ninth verses, already quoted. In these latter verses the apostle speaks of "*the righteousness of the law*" and "*his own righteousness.*" These, in his estimation, did not differ but were one and the same, and, as such, were subjective and personal. Gladly did he part with this legal, self-originated, and mere outer righteousness, "*that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) Now if this latter righteousness did not become subjectively Paul's according to his faith, there would be no propriety in setting the one over against the other. Nor could the righteousness desired fill the void in the soul which the other was insufficient to fill. Indeed, the whole paragraph is unintelligible on the supposition that it is only of an external imputative righteousness of which Paul speaks, of one that could be his in law only, and not to any degree spiritually so. For he immediately goes on to express the deep desire of his heart, "*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death*" (Phil. iii. 10), language which, with the clearness of a sunbeam, demonstrates that the righteousness, the knowledge, the fellowship of suffering and conformity to death were so far subjectively experienced.

These were the means by which Paul was to become perfect and "*apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus.*" (Phil. iii. 12.) With this holy man it was not possible to separate the internal from the external righteousness of God. Both were required to save the soul, who was at once under the curse of a broken law and under the power of indwelling sin. The gospel is thus demonstrated to be the power of God for the deliverance of man in the entirety of his being. It suits his case exactly, because it reveals a perfect righteousness, which, in the Saviour, is the ground of his acceptance, and which, as the seed of the kingdom, is in the soul through faith as the principle of an upright moral character.

Besides, there must be an ethical subjective element in the righteousness of God received by faith from the relation which necessarily exists between the object and the act of faith. Faith is not like love in its nature. Love gives, but faith receives. The former is the hand that opens itself and distributes its blessings, and the latter is the hand that closes on the gift bestowed and makes it one's own. This is true of faith whether it terminates on objects which have to do with this world, or on those things and beings which have to do with the unseen and eternal. The man, for instance, who believes in heroism embodied in a heroic life, must partake according to the degree of his faith of the principle believed in. He could not be cowardly if danger were near, nor would he be weak-hearted when duty called.

In like manner, those who believe in a patriot who is genuine through and through must, according to the laws which govern the human mind, be patriotic. The same may be said of piety, truthfulness, or any other virtue embodied in a person and manifested in a life. By means of faith, that which others have, may in this way become ours. Faith is the means by which one spirit can impart some of its own possessions to others. This explains some of those wonderful deeds of the great men of the past, and the mighty influences which they have exercised on lesser men. It is said that, on one occasion, the great Napoleon fired and thrilled his whole army with the valour which filled his own bosom. The French were engaged with the Austrians, who had a decided advantage over them, by having possession of a bridge on which they had planted their most powerful artillery. The keen eye of the great General saw that the bridge was the key of the situation, and that before any progress could be made towards victory it must be taken. Some of the bravest men of the French army were ordered to move forward and take the bridge. They did so, but as they rode into "the jaws of death and the mouth of hell," they faltered and retired, broken and discomfited. The command, "Charge," was once more given with like result. Yet once more the order to advance was issued, but the guns of the enemy were as destructive as ever. Napoleon seeing that, if the bridge were not wrested from the possession of his foes, the day would be lost, and his prestige so

far destroyed, rushed forward, seized the standard borne by the dispirited troops, put spurs to his horse, and exclaimed, "Follow me." The soldiers beholding the bravery and calmness of their leader, in whose power and generalship they had at that moment the fullest faith, became strong with his strength, and brave with his courage. With determined step they marched on, took possession of the guns, swept the bridge of the enemy, and decided the battle. So is it in regard to these high and holy things of which we write. He who believes in the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ makes, by his faith and according thereto, that in which believes his own. "Faith," says Luther, "taketh hold on Christ and hath him present, and holdeth him inclosed as the ring doth the precious stone; and whosoever shall be found having this confidence in Christ, apprehended in the heart, him will God account for righteous." "Wherefore," he saith elsewhere, "Christ apprehended by faith and dwelling in the heart is true Christian righteousness." But this is not *perfect* righteousness viewed as subjectively realised in the believer's soul. It cannot be, because the faith which apprehends it is imperfect, and is too frequently like a grain of mustard seed. But in proportion to the measure of faith so is the righteousness imparted. At first it is as small as the leaven which the woman took and hid in three measures of meal, but, like the same leaven, it will operate until the whole is subdued to its power and the reign of God fully established. And what is this but

another way of stating that the sinner is not only justified when he believes the gospel, but that he is also, through the word received, born again, created anew in Christ Jesus—made the righteousness of God in him.

The sum and substance of what we have advanced in this chapter is, that God imputes to the believer the perfect righteousness of Christ—*i.e.*, reckons it to him as if it were his own, and treats him accordingly, and at the same time he imparts the germ of the same righteousness which serves as the righteous principle from which all righteous acts spring. After this manner Christ Jesus is of God "*made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*" (1 Cor. i. 30.) This doctrine has been held by the great divines of the Christian Church with more or less explicitness in all ages. The apostolic fathers, as was to be expected, dwelt upon Jesus and his death for man in its ethical relations more than its forensic, and hence they gave prominence to the sanctifying rather than to the justifying aspects of the righteousness of God. Augustine contended for the impartation of the righteousness of God to believers, and confounded it with justification. In his commentary on Rom. i. 17, he says:—"This is the righteousness of God, which having been kept under a veil in the Old Testament was revealed in the New, and is called 'Righteousness of God' on this account because God makes men righteous by imparting it, just as salvation is of the Lord by which the Lord makes men safe." The same falls to be said of Chrysostom.

"It is," he remarks, "not called your own righteousness but God's, indicating thereby both its richness and its easiness. For you do not secure it by sweat and labour, but you receive it as a gift from above, bringing only one thing of your own—viz., believing."

But it is only when we come to Dr. Martin Luther that we find the doctrine stated in something like its due proportions. Into its study he threw himself with all the energy of his noble nature. The solution of it was a matter of death and life to him, and in mastering it he spent many precious days of his life. His views are enunciated with fulness and precision in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians. Having clearer and more scriptural ideas of justification than either the Bishop of Hippo or the Golden-mouthed Man, he had a much more correct and biblical conception of the impartation of the righteousness of God. In "The Argument of the Epistle," he says, "This most excellent righteousness of faith, I mean (which God, through Christ, without works imputeth unto us,) is neither political, nor ceremonial, nor the righteousness of God's law, nor consisteth in works, but is clean contrary, that is to say, a mere passive righteousness, as the others above are active. For in this we work nothing, we render nothing unto God, but only we receive and suffer another to work in us, that is to say God." Further on he observes, "The righteousness of the law is earthly, and has to do with earthly things, and by it we do good works. But as the earth bringeth not forth fruit, except first it be watered

and made fruitful from above; even so by the righteousness of the law in doing many things we do nothing, and in fulfilling the law we fulfil it not, except first without any merit or works of ours we be made righteous by the Christian righteousness which nothing appertaineth to the righteousness of the law, or to the earthly and active righteousness. But this righteousness is heavenly; which as is said we have not, but which by grace is wrought in us, and apprehended by faith, whereby we mount up above all law and works. Wherefore, like as we have borne, as St. Paul saith, the image of the earthly Adam, so let us bear the image of the heavenly." In these extracts we have set before us the Reformer's doctrine of the righteousness "which is wrought in us and apprehended by faith." He clearly saw that it was imputed to those who believed, and that they were justified on the ground of a righteousness not their own, but God's. It was only, he contended, in the Beloved that they could be accepted. Luther held, moreover, that it was *imparted*, as well as *imputed*, "wrought in us by God, and apprehended by the faith which holdeth it inclosed, as the ring the precious stone." And, therefore, he insists again and again that "Christian righteousness consisteth in two things, that is to say, in faith and God's imputation." Such is the doctrine by which the solitary Monk shook the world.

Neander follows Luther, and maintains that the righteousness of God is received both objectively and subjectively, forensically and ethically. He says,

“δικαιοσύνη (righteousness) denotes the subjective appropriation of this relation, the appearing righteous before God by virtue of faith in the Redeemer, and the whole new tendency and aim of life, as well as the whole new relation to God now received into the consciousness which is necessarily connected with it, the righteousness or perfect holiness of Christ appropriated by faith as the *objective* ground of confidence for the believer, and also as a new *subjective* principle of life. Thus the righteousness of faith in the Pauline sense includes the essence of a new disposition, and hence the idea of δικαιοσύνη (righteousness) may easily pass into the idea of sanctification, though the two ideas are originally distinct.”*

Olshausen, too, in the main agrees with Luther. When speaking of man's need of arriving at an absolutely right relation, he says, “But this, because it presupposes an inward transformation, the man cannot of himself, and by his own strength accomplish. On this account it is called δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (righteousness of God), or ἐκ πίστεως = διὰ πίστεως, Gal. ii. 16 (of faith, equivalent to through faith), because God gives it, and man receives it, in faith. In this case it is God himself in the man, the Christ in us who satisfies that which God demands of him, and therefore, that which, on the side of evil, exhibits itself not as substance, but as a mere relation, has on the side of good in its completion

* “Planting of Christianity,” vol. i. p. 457.

passed into substantiality; for nothing is really good but God himself, and his influence, but where he works there he also is." *

Stier, in his commentary on the words, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*" (Mat. vi. 33), remarks, "The righteousness of God is to be understood here strictly according to its Pauline use, as indicating both that which He requires and which avails before him, and also that which he imparts, since he himself feeds us with the establishment of his own will in us as the Bread of Life."† Many modern British theologians and expositors hold a similar doctrine, and the tendency of theological thought among progressive evangelical Christians is in this direction. The doctrine of a mere imputative righteousness by faith, to the exclusion of the righteousness of God received, is a part of the system, not of the German reformer Luther, but of the Genevan divine Calvin, which must yield to the fuller doctrine, as Calvinism loses its power. This it is doing rapidly in all places where it was wont to exercise dominion. So that the day is not far distant when it will be seen by all students of the Bible, that the phrase, "the righteousness of God," signifies in the words of another, "the attribute of God embodied in Christ, manifested in the world, revealed in the Gospel, communicated to the individual soul—the righteousness

* "Commentary on Romans," pp. 134-5.

† "Words of the Lord Jesus," vol. i. p. 273.

not of the law, but of faith." So soon as this is proclaimed in faith and earnestness a revival of vital religion will be the result, the adaptation of the gospel to meet the condition of our sinful race will be felt, and spiritual life and progress will be experienced. What is now thought of by many as mere legal fiction, by means of which a semblance of righteousness is kept up in the universe, will be acknowledged as amongst the greatest of all realities. The moral philosophy of the schools will give place as a regenerating power to the spiritual truth of Christianity. Jesus and his righteousness will be preached by earnest men of God, and be apprehended by faith as the ground of pardon, peace, and hope, and as the root principle of the new life which is hid with Christ in God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD UNTO ALL MEN.

Is the righteousness of God, which has been brought nigh as the ground of justification and the root of the new life, unto all men, or unto only a certain class of men? The question is important in its practical bearings, and has received different answers since the fourth century. Augustine, Gottschalk, and Calvin maintained that God does not view all the race with the same feelings; he loves some, say they, with a special love, and hates others with a special hatred. Calvin and his followers most clearly teach that all men are not created for the like estate. Some were created that they might reach eternal life, and others were brought forth by the creative hand that they might glorify their Maker by bearing his eternal wrath.* For the latter class, there is no love in

* Calvin's words are—"All are not created on equal terms, but some are foreordained to eternal life and others to eternal damnation, and accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death."—*Institutes*, B. III. Chap. xxi. Sec. 5. Other statements of a like import might be given from Calvin's followers, but we forbear. The system is well known.

the heart of the divine Father, there is no righteousness brought nigh by the divine Son, and there are no saving influences vouchsafed by the Holy Ghost. In the words of the Westminster Confession they are "passed by and ordained to dishonour and wrath for their sins." Poor, wretched beings they are and must for ever remain, wanderers who roam in moral midnight and darkness; for if God be against them, who can be for them? If he forsake them, who can take them up?

Other theologians, however, and on the whole, the majority of the Church of God, have looked upon this narrow, partial doctrine of Calvin as in direct opposition to the genius of Christianity and the plainest teachings of the Holy Scriptures. They take their stand on Calvary where the heavenly light shines the clearest, and they view all the attributes and relations of God by its means. Standing with their eyes fixed on the cross, they see that God sustains the relation of a Father to all and that He is no respecter of persons. Although all the members of the human family have sinned, and that grievously, nevertheless He loves them. This love has followed them into the far country where they waste the riches of being they received from his hand. It sought them there in the person of his well-beloved Son, on whom the Father "*made to meet the iniquities of us all.*" (Isa. liii. 6.) The mission of Jesus as the outcome of the Father's love, was not to one class but to all men without distinction or exception. Unto all

men he has brought nigh salvation, that those who are condemned and unrighteous, "*might become the righteousness of God in him.*" (2 Cor. v. 21.) This is the message which angels sung in the hearing of Bethlehem shepherds of old. This is the burden of the words of the Saviour. It is the doctrine the apostles unfold in their letters, and it is woven into the texture of all that God has said and done manward since the fatal day of Eden. We submit the following arguments as proving its truthfulness.

First, *The existence of the race of man proves that Jesus has brought nigh a perfect righteousness to all its members.* That the race has an existence is beyond disputation, and that there is a *reason* for its existence is also beyond doubt. This reason is not dimly shadowed forth in the inspired history of the creation of man and the origin of our race. When we open the volume of the book at the beginning of Genesis, we there find that God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. Afterwards we read, "*The Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man he had formed.*" (Genesis ii. 8.) God also gave him a commandment, saying, "*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) Notwithstanding this plain and easily obeyed command, Adam did eat, and by doing so, came under the sweep of the penalty threatened. In accordance with the Edenic law, the

day he sinned he forfeited his life on the earth, and thereby the existence of the race of which he was constituted the original parent. But the arm of retributive justice raised to punish was not allowed to fall on his rebellious head. Mercy interposed and stayed the punishment. The sinner was allowed to live on the earth, and not only to live, but also to become the father of an ever-increasing family, countless in number, and which has held its position for ages. If the penalty had been executed on the day that Adam sinned, there would have been no family of man. No child would have been born into this mundane sphere, and the evolution of the grand redemptive purpose of the divine moral providence would never have taken place. Adam, however, was not visited with death. God himself became his deliverer and preserver. With his own gracious lips he unfolded to the guilty pair his saving design, and preached the hope of the world in the promise of the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent. On account of the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, Adam and Eve were allowed to exist in the body, and to become the natural heads of the whole human race. Their existence in the flesh was conditioned on Christ, and on Christ as the one in whom they could find righteousness and complete redemption. And so is the existence of every one of their numerous descendants. Each one of human kind may say, "If there had been no Jesus Christ, no Saviour, no righteousness for me, I never would have been created. The

"root of my being is in the Son of God, and the reason of my existence is alone found in him. Christ, therefore, is for me. He is the one to whom I owe my life. He must be my friend. He must be on my side." The existence and history of man are inscrutable enigmas when considered apart from Christ, but we get glimpses into their meaning when viewed in their relation to the Son of Man, who came from heaven that he might bring nigh to the ungodly a righteousness in which they might be exalted.

Secondly, *The relation which Jesus sustains to each member of the human race as the second Adam proves that he has brought righteousness nigh to all men.* There are two Adams mentioned in the New Testament by the apostle Paul. Both these stand in intimate relation to all mankind. The one is the type, and the other is the antitype; the one is the shadow, and the other is the substance; the one is earthly, and the other is heavenly; the one is the natural, and the other is the spiritual head of universal man. We need have no difficulty in determining which of the two Adams is the substance and which is the shadow. The question is settled for us by the apostle of the Gentiles when he declares that the earthly Adam "*was the figure or type of Him who was to come.*" (Rom. v. 14.) Jesus is, therefore, the true Adam, and the Adam of Eden is only representatively so, and stands on a lower plane. Now to both the figurative and the real Adam all men stand related. From them both we derive our existence, and in them we discover

the roots from which our complex nature has sprung. From the earthly Adam we derive our bodies and animal life, for he was "*made a living soul.*" (1 Cor. xv. 45.) From the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, we have received our spiritual natures, for he "*was made a quickening spirit.*" (1 Cor. xv. 45.) Because of this relation there is part of both the old and new Adam in every man. The one part seeking to lead to sin and slavery, and the other guiding into holiness and freedom. Account for it as we may, it is nevertheless true, as testified by all experience, that so soon as we are conscious of the right, and can distinguish between good and evil, there is a law, or power, or principle, call it what we may, in our members which wars incessantly against our well-being, endeavouring to bring us into captivity. This is almost the first thing of which we are conscious, and it clings to us closer than our shadow. It is the darkness which presses into the inner sanctuary of the mind, and that comprehends not the true light. This evil principle is not ours personally. We do not originate it. It comes unbidden, and will not be gone at our command. It seeks to reign in the minds of all men throughout heathendom and Christendom. The heathen complain of "bonds and chains by which their minds were held from infancy, and which sought to fasten and nail the soul to the body." And he who has the Word of God in his hands finds that Paul describes his own condition with faithfulness when he says, "*I see another law in my members, warring against the law of*

my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 23.) For this evil tempting principle we are not held guilty so long as we resist its power. We are not responsible for its presence in our souls, and God does not treat us as if we were. It is to us, personally, a foreign element, and we cannot account for it otherwise than by saying, that it is an evil principle which, on account of our earthly head, has been transmitted from sire to son, and which, when yielded to, issues in personal transgressions, in unholy thoughts, and depraved feelings.

As there is thus part of the old Adam in all men, so we rejoice to believe that there is a part of the new Adam in the whole human race. If this had not been granted to man redemption would have been an impossibility, and the elevation of a single soul a thing we could not have anticipated. Human sinners would have been in the condition of those who kept not their first estate, and to whom there is no salvation. But as there is an evil principle which operates as a tempting power and is the law of the members, so, thank God, there is a righteous principle which is ever on the side of God and goodness, and is the law of the spirit of life. The latter is as real, indeed more real than the former, and is deeper in our moral being. It is, moreover, as universal. "*Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.*" (Rom. v. 20.) No child of Adam is destitute of this "*true light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world.*" (John i. 9.)

"The darkest cloud that shades the sky
 Of beauty hath a share;
 The darkest soul hath signs which tell
 That God still lingers there."

This gives a dignity and preciousness to the human soul which nothing else could bestow. Not only is Christ for every man, but there is an important sense in which he is in every man. At least he has brought nigh his saving righteousness, and he presses it on man's acceptance. He does so in the solemn moments of life when the eye of sense is closed, and the eye of reason which gazes on the realities of the unseen is open. He does so by his gracious providence in manifold, yea million-fold ways. He does so by the gospel, the Spirit, by the Bible, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, by life and death, by sunshine and storm. The Spirit is whispering into the ear at all times, "Open the door and I will come in and will sup with you." Believing that God has provided a perfect righteousness for every soul of man, reformers in Church and State can labour in their several spheres with heart and hope. They are co-workers with God in the regeneration of the world. Like the noble, moral heroes of other days, they *"both labour and suffer reproach because they trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe."* (1 Tim. iv. 10.)

Thirdly, *That all men, though sinners, are blessed materially and spiritually, proves that Jesus has brought nigh righteousness to all men.* We live in a world which

is not ruled according to the principles of strict moral government. The results of the evil deeds done in the body are not the invariable and immediate sequents of the acts of sin. Though all men have transgressed the law and come short of the glory of God, they are not treated by the divine moral Governor as sinners. The cup of their lives is not filled with penal sufferings, but into it many blessings have been poured by his gracious hand. This is true of all the members of the race. In the experience of the most wretched of our fellow creatures life is a blessing, and their terrestrial path has been strewn with flowers. The poorest of the poor, the most miserable of the wretched, have many things which are fraught with good, and on account of which they smile. On one occasion, recently, we met with one of those boys whose lot appears about the hardest that can be experienced, who opened up his heart to our inspection. His history was a tale of sadness, sin, and suffering. He had not always done what he ought to have done, but many a time he had said *no* to the inward monitor which desired him to say *yes*. This he knew and frankly and honestly acknowledged. Many a sorrow, he said, had embittered his short life, and many a salt tear he had shed which was wrung from his very heart. Still he had his joys, and these, on the whole, were deeper and more lasting than his miseries. On the whole, and from one end of the year to the other, he felt that to live on the earth was a boon. He acknowledged he was blessed beyond his deserts, and that

he did not receive the evil from God which was his due.

The like testimony was borne by an aged widow on her dying bed. She lost her husband when the youngest of her three children, now grown to full maturity, was born. The few friends she had before the bereavement, became gradually fewer as time wore on and her difficulties increased. She struggled on with many imperfections; and with much conscious failing she fought her earnest life-battle. At last disease, with deadly hand, sought the seat of her life. It was a long, lingering, painful illness through which she was called upon to pass. And when we saw her last she was not far from the verge of the swelling Jordan. As she stood on its banks her testimony was to the effect that though she deserved wrath she had received mercy, and that though she had not fulfilled the royal law of love, she had not received punishment but blessing. Goodness and mercy had followed her all through, and made her brave and strong. This, too, would be the testimony which all men would bear if they uttered their truest and deepest thoughts. They are not treated as they deserve to be treated. Instead of frowns they receive smiles, and blessing after blessing descends from heaven's King upon them. Now, how are we to explain this? How are we to reconcile this with the holy and righteous character of the government of Jehovah? On no other principle, we presume, save upon that of the perfect righteousness brought nigh to all men in Christ Jesus. If there had been no such

righteousness available to all men, the present divine government of the earth could not be either vindicated or explained. For if God could bless sinners with temporal blessings without an atonement, the basis principle of which is a perfect divine righteousness, there is no reason why he could not vouchsafe to them eternal mercies in like manner. So that we are shut up either to deny the necessity of the existence of a perfect righteousness for human salvation altogether, or admit that the righteousness brought nigh is unto all men, and that on account of it all are blessed. This is the ground on which we take our stand, and from this evidence we can look to the right hand and to the left and see that all blessings are blood-bought, and are bestowed on the righteous and unthankful, because in the Lord there is righteousness and plenteous redemption.

Fourthly, *It is distinctly declared by the Apostle Paul that the righteousness of God through faith in Christ is unto all men.* In the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans we read, "*The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all those who believe.*" (Rom. iii. 22.) We do not require to enter upon an elaborate examination of this verse in order to ascertain the meaning of the words of the apostle. Paul has been showing in the immediately preceding context that all men, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, had violated the perfect law and come under the power of death and sin. He dwelt at length upon the intense degradation into which all men without distinction or

exception had fallen by reason of their departure from God. This was done with the view of preparing the way for two statements, each of which is of the utmost importance at all times and to all men. The first is, that seeing that all the world had become guilty before God, "*Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*" (Rom. iii. 20.) There is no hope for man in law therefore. It gives increased knowledge of sin and resultant dispeace and unrest. But of pardon and hope to the transgressor it knows nothing. Having shown that this door of escape is shut and bolted with a triple bar, he turns the sinner's eye to an open door which no man can shut, in the words, "*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*" (Rom. iii. 21, 22.) There are two classes before the apostle's mind when he penned these words. The former is universal and includes all men, and the latter is circumscribed to those who believe. The relations which the righteousness stands in to those two classes are expressed by the two prepositions "*unto*" and "*upon*." It is "*upon*" believers as a covering, protecting them from all the outgoings of retribution, and is a spiritual garment which is white and glistening. It is "*unto all*"* as a

* Rev. Joseph T. Goodsir in his *Biblical and Patristic Doctrine of Salvation*, vol. i. p. 289, translates the words *εἰς πάντας* "*into all*."

free gift in Christ Jesus to be received by faith. "The righteousness," says Dr. James Morison, "is *for all*. It was provided *for all*. It was wrought out *in behalf of all*. It is tendered *unto all*. It is free *to all*. For Christ 'gave himself a ransom *for all*.' (1 Tim. ii. 6.) He 'tasted death *for every man*.' (Heb. ii. 9.) He is a 'propitiation for the sins of *the whole world*.'" (1 John ii. 1, 2.) All these expressions are but other aspects of the idea that the evangelical righteousness of God is *unto all*. The gospel of God's grace—which equally announces the *ransom*, the *death-tasting*, the *propitiation*, and the *righteousness*—is a message of mercy 'to every creature.' It has relations to man as man in whatever external circumstances, and in whatever intellectual, social, or moral state he may be found.* All scripture is in harmony with this declaration. The Prophets, Apostles, and Jesus himself, with a clearness and distinctness which we marvel any could misunderstand, bear witness to the strict universality of God's provision of righteousness. With one voice, though in different phraseology, they all declare, "*God so loved the*

Bengel and others give the same translation. There can be no doubt but that *eis* is susceptible of the meaning, in, into, or within. It is thus rendered in the authorised version. Mr. Goodsir thinks that the Saviour uses the prepositions as Paul does in the text, when he speaks of the wine poured "*into* the bottles," and of the cloth being sewed "*upon* the garment." By these figures Jesus meant, he says, to illustrate that righteousness of God which is both *within* and *upon* the subjects of the kingdom.

* Critical Exposition of Romans iii. pp. 230, 231.

world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 16.)

And finally, *The intense desire of God that all men should be saved, proves that he has brought nigh righteousness to all men.* There is no possibility of exaggerating the desire of God in reference to man's salvation. Everywhere, and by all possible means is this desire manifested; sometimes God speaks as a mother would speak concerning her prodigal child, whom she yearned to clasp in the arms of her love. At other times he wails over lost souls as one who has struggled hard to reconcile rebellious hearts to himself and been resisted at every step. Again, he appeals from man to nature that the heavens and the earth would sympathise with their Creator and Lord in his long-suffering mercy towards those ready to die. And then, as if to impress the thought of his unfathomed and unpurchased love for each man on his stony heart, He swears by his own holy name, because there is none higher or holier, "*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) To demonstrate his love the Father gave his Son as the greatest gift he could bestow. He "*spared him not, but delivered him up to the death for us all.*" (Rom. viii. 32.) *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" (1 John iv. 10.) He now stands with open arms ready to receive the return-

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increases, and it becomes less as faith declines. The more that we believe the truth as it is in Jesus the more will our hearts be the dwelling-place of this divine emotion, which lifts us out of ourselves and makes us live in and for another, even God our Father. Such love leads to sanctification, for it consecrates the whole life to the object loved. It bestows itself, and all that it can bring along with itself, to God. From the heart in which it dwells there ever rises the prayer, "I am thine, O Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And this affection grows until body, soul, and spirit are sanctified to the God of salvation—to his service on earth and to fellowship with him in heaven.

Loving God with the whole heart, the believer also is constrained to love his neighbour. His views of God, of sin, of Christ being changed, so are his views of man. Once he looked on the race with the cold eye of indifference; but now he looks on it in the mild light of Calvary. In that light men are seen not as *things*, but as *persons*; not as strangers, but as brethren of the same family; not as beasts of burden to be used for selfish ends and purposes, but as immortal children of the essentially immortal God. Loving Christ, he who has faith loves all men in Christ, for Christ, to his spiritual eye, appears more or less in every man. And thus in his experience the love which comes from God, through the channel of faith, rises up to its original source in order only to flow down in large measures to and over all the earth. It returns also to, and embraces self, not

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD RECEIVED AND WROUGHT OUT BY MAN.

THE end of religion is not speculative, or emotional, but practical. It is action. It is the embodiment in daily life of heaven's truth and love. If this be not done, the design of the wise God is not accomplished, nor is the desire of the Saviour satisfied. The sacrifice made by the Divine Father when he gave up to the death his well-beloved Son, the soul-travail and agonies of the Son, and the earnest pleadings of the Holy Spirit, were and are with the view of ensphering the wandering soul in the orbit of filial obedience, that, as a son and loyal subject, he might move through the ages to the glory of heaven's Righteous King. This end can only be gained when the human spirit appropriates and works out, in thought, word, and deed, the righteousness of God brought nigh by Jesus Christ. Without this divine principle, there can be no spiritual life, no good works, no genuine obedience, no assimilation to the moral image of the Master. Apart from the possession of this element of perfect moral character, there can be

describe himself truthfully only by saying that he was the chief of sinners. So it ever has been and so it must ever be. We receive salvation only in part; in this world a simple foretaste of the inheritance is all that is given. As we walk by faith, not by sight, we are not at home, but look for a city whose builder and maker is God. "*We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*" (Rom. viii. 24.) "*Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" (Rom. viii. 26.)

This yearning for higher things springs out of our imperfect spiritual condition, and the promises of a brighter future. The soul desires and expects a perfect deliverance when redemption will be complete internally and externally, and a new realm will be inhabited, in which nothing adverse to the divine life will exist. Such a hope leads to constant prayer, to indeed one long life prayer. The desire is not only in the heart—but, as it comes from above, it returns to its native source. True prayer is thus from God and to God, and it ever must ascend till faith melt into sight, and hope rise to full fruition. But, at present, while in the body environed by evil "*there abideth hope, faith, charity, these three.*" (1 Cor. xiii. 13.)

The relation which faith, love, and hope bear to each other is no arbitrary relation. It is divinely ordained, and is founded in highest wisdom. They have the one common root in the word of the gospel, but they manifest

themselves in human consciousness according to a given order. The last must not be placed first, nor the middle last. If we seek love before faith, our search will be in vain; and if we endeavour to possess hope before either, our labour will be equally fruitless. Faith is first, then love by faith, and hope from both. Their functions are also distinct. "Faith hangs on the word of promise, love on that God who gives, hope on the promised inheritance. Faith receives and has, love gives, hope waits. Faith makes the heart firm, love makes it soft, hope expands it. Faith holds fast to what it has received, love gives up what it has received, hope triumphs over what is wanting. Faith capacitates us for dominion over this world, love for ministering to this world, hope for renunciation of this world. Faith rests on that wherein it has for this present time full sufficiency, love acts and finds employment in that in which it can never satisfy itself, hope loses itself in that which lifts it above all the sufficiency and insufficiency of this world. Faith is the confidence in what one hopes for, love the proof of this—that one has faith, hope the taking possession, before we have reached the goal, of that which we have learned by faith, to love and to yearn after. Faith is what it ceases to be in sight, hope is what it ceases to be in full possession, love is that which it never ceases to be, for God is love."* When these three Christian graces, are possessed all the elements needful for moral character are possessed. Inspiration from the past, pres-

* Hareless' System of Christian Ethics, pp. 165-6.

ent, and future flows into the spirit, and the man of God becomes thoroughly furnished unto every good and noble work.

By reason of these divinely in-wrought principles, obedience to the will of God, as expressed in the moral law, becomes possible and easy. Instead of beginning with such obedience, insisting upon it as the one thing needful to the divine life, we end with it. The stream is not before the fountain, nor the rays before the sun ; so neither is sanctification and holiness before the possession of, or in order to righteousness. Righteousness, even the righteousness of God by faith, is first in experience, and sanctification and holiness are its appropriate fruits. They are never confounded in Scripture as they are in the systems of men. But the former is ever spoken of as the spiritual principle, which, when wrought out in deeds, is the holiness without which no one can see the Lord. When the heart is under the control of the righteousness of God received by faith, the fruit will be unto holiness and the end eternal life. Good works will follow faith, and the renewed spirit will bring forth those good works by which the gospel of God should ever be adorned. And when the believer works out in daily life what the Holy Spirit works in through the truth, sanctification is advanced, holiness promoted, God's name glorified, and man blessed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD SCRIPTURALLY CONSIDERED.

HITHERTO we have viewed the subject of our essay principally in its theological aspects, and it is necessary that we should now consider more particularly the scriptural grounds of the doctrine advanced. In adopting this method we run the risk of repetition, and of traversing part of the field already gone over. But if by doing so we expound more fully what we desire to make plain, and deepen the impression of its truthfulness, neither reader nor writer will have much reason to complain.

All that we intend to do in this chapter is simply to transfer to our pages certain passages of Scripture in which the phrase, "The righteousness of God," occurs, and in a few words to explain their general import. The passages will be mostly—though not exclusively—taken from the New Testament, where the phrase is employed by the sacred penmen with a definite meaning. All the places where it is so employed will not be produced; the more important will be considered.

Before adducing the passages of Scripture, we would once more state the general thesis of our essay, so

that it may be compared with the declarations of the authoritative rule of faith. It is, that all spiritual righteousness, whether found in God, Jesus Christ, angel, or man, is God's, and consequently is a unity; and, further, that the word Righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) signifies, in every place in which it occurs in the New Testament, a mental state—an element of character. It is never used, for example, in the sense of action, work, or obedience to law. When applied to man it has the uniform meaning of an element of moral character, which is not produced by the action of the human will, but received, and which is simple, and not complex in its nature. Its home is in the heart of God. From thence it comes to moral creatures, and is, by those who voluntarily receive it, manifested in thought, word, and deed. God, having it in perfection and infinite fulness, is holy, perfect, and good; and in so far as man possesses it, to that extent is he like his God and Creator. But to the passages; and—

First, *Those passages which speak of righteousness as possessed by God.*—It is predicated of God as an attribute of character by Elihu when he said, “*I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*” (Job. xxxvi. 3.) And by Paul when he asks, “*If our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God?*” (Rom. iii. 5.) In both these passages the uprightness of God is referred to. Not only were his acts holy and righteous, but he possessed righteousness as an element of his glorious moral character. This, the writers both

in the Old and the New Testament, ascribe unto the Most High; and because they had the firmest faith that God possessed righteousness, they had the utmost confidence that he would do right though all creatures should prove false. Being the possessor of perfect infinite righteousness, God was looked upon by them as worthy of all trust, reverence, worship, and service.

Secondly, *The righteousness of God to be sought first by man.*—Jesus in the sermon on the Mount exhorted those he addressed not to give their attention primarily to the externals of this life, and to anxiously and engrossingly care for meat, drink, and clothing; but, says the Saviour, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.*” (Matt. vi. 33.) He had before told them that there was a righteousness which men ought to possess, but which the Pharisees had not. This is higher and purer, and exceeded that of the Scribes, and was indeed not of man’s production, but was from heaven. To suppose that this which is to be sought first is the righteousness which is prescribed in the law, and to be attained by works, is to misunderstand the entire evangelical scheme, and to set anxious souls on the wrong track. The kingdom of heaven is, we are told by Paul, doubtless with special reference to this passage, “*righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.*” (Rom. xiv. 17.) And this kingdom is to be entered, and the righteousness sought and found, not by law, but by gospel, not by works, but by faith. The righteousness of God,

therefore, which we are to seek first, is that which is elsewhere said to be received by faith. It is not the result of works of law, but it is God's own righteousness which he imparts by faith to those who receive the gospel. When received, it is a new life and moral condition which enables its possessors to render to God a hearty obedience, and not like that of the Scribes, and to be religious in spirit and not in form, as were the Pharisees. The possessors of this divine principle are enabled to begin in this world to live in harmony with the words of the Great Preacher in his sermon. They will love those who hate them, bless and curse not, resist not evil, and aspire to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.

Thirdly, *The righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel.*—If we are to seek this precious blessing, it must be placed within our reach, and that it is so placed the apostle of the Gentiles assumes when he declares, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation ; to the Jew first and also to the Greek ; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.*" (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Substantially the same idea is expressed in the tenth chapter of the same epistle, where we read that the righteousness of faith saith, "*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart ; that is the word of faith which we preach.*" (Rom. x. 8.) Discussions of an intricate nature have taken place as to the precise import of the phrase, "the righteousness of God," as it occurs in these passages.

These have arisen, we opine, because it was imagined that the righteousness of God proper could not become a saving power, but must ever remain a condemning attribute in relation to sinners. As manifested in the law, it can alone condemn; but as revealed in the gospel, it both condemns and saves. It condemns sin and saves the sinner. As a matter of history, it condemned the world's sin in Jesus, and having done so it is presented to the faith of the sinner in the gospel. That this is but a different manifestation of the inherent righteousness of God, is evident from its relation to salvation. It is the *power* that saves, and a power that issues in salvation must be moral as well as legal in its nature, and suited to do away not only with the penalty of sin, but also with the dominion which iniquity exercises over the inner man. Explain these verses on any other hypothesis, and the words must be tortured to utter what they were never intended to convey, and serious confusion of thought is the result. Let them be expounded in harmony with the fundamental principle that spiritual righteousness is a divine unity, and that it only differs in its aspects and manifestations, and the verses become luminous, and the whole teaching of the epistle harmonious.

Fourthly, *The Righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.*—It is revealed in the gospel, because the gospel makes known Jesus Christ the living Saviour. It is possessed by him, and by him as an element of his spotless character. The passages which teach and imply this are

many, and are to be found in both Testaments. He is called by the suggestive appellation, "*The Lord our righteousness.*" (Jer. xxiii. 6.) One is represented as saying, "*In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*" (Isa. xlv. 24.) In the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans and the third chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, it is stated that the righteousness of God is "*by faith of Jesus Christ.*" The entire scope and design of the gospel plan of salvation implies that the righteousness of God was possessed in a perfect measure by the Saviour; and that, too, not as divine simply, but in his Theanthropic condition as the God-man. It was the animating principle of the reasonable soul of Jesus, as well as an element of the character of the "Word" of God. Otherwise the gospel would not have revealed the righteousness of God, nor been the power of God, unto salvation. The gospel is the gospel because it makes known the righteousness of God as a saving power, and it does so because it testifies of Jesus Christ, in whom it was experienced in all its plenitude. This element of moral character in Jesus is *provided* for man, inasmuch as Jesus is the gift of God. But it was not *produced* by Jesus in his earthly life and by obedience to the law of love. Nowhere is such an idea even hinted at throughout the entire volume of inspiration, though common in theological treatises. It is set before us in Scripture as "brought nigh," "brought in," "revealed," "manifested," "declared," but not in one single passage is it ever said to be pro-

duced by Jesus. The reason of this is obvious. It is not a righteousness which Christ brought into existence, but one which he received when the Spirit was given to him without measure. Because he received and cherished it in his saviourly heart as a true Son, he ever obeyed the divine Father,—yea, was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. As the obedience was Christ's own, and could not with any propriety of speech be called the obedience of God, it follows that the righteousness—being God's—could not be the obedience. Christ participated in God's righteousness in his incarnate condition when he died the just for the unjust, and it gives dignity, purity, spirituality, and worth to all that Jesus said, did, and endured when he trod the earth as a man of sorrows.

Fifthly, *The righteousness of God received by faith.*—The passages which bring out the condition, on the fulfilment of which the righteousness of God may become man's, are numerous, not a few of them have been already produced and commented on. It is said to be "*from faith to faith.*" (Rom. i. 17.) "*By faith of Jesus Christ.*" (Rom. iii. 22.) "*Through the faith of Christ.*" (Phil. iii. 9.) It is also referred to as "*the righteousness by faith.*" (Rom. iv. 13; ix. 30; x. 6.) By the way of faith it is to come into the possession of man as a sinner. Faith is the hand that receives the gift, and by which that, which is personally possessed by God, becomes the believer's. Faith in its very nature is receptive, and in its last analysis is not the product of the

believing mind. It has proximately to do with testimony, and ultimately with the things testified. Faith, however, is not an act of will, though attention to testimony is, but *it is the persuasion of the mind that the thing testified is true*. The faculties of the mind engaged in the belief of truth depend on the nature of the truth beheld. If the object presented in the testimony be of a nature which can be apprehended by the intellect only, then the intellect alone enters into faith. But if the object be moral as well as intellectual, then the moral powers must be satisfied of its truthfulness, as well as the intellectual. Let us illustrate our meaning by the subject before us. The gospel which makes known the righteousness of God in Jesus is brought before our minds by the Holy Ghost. We are conscious as he does so, that we have the power to direct our attention either to the heavenly message, or to any other object within the sphere of our knowledge. There is no necessity laid upon us to do the one or the other. There are reasons, it is true, of the most transcendent nature, *why* we should give all diligent heed to the glad tidings of great joy; but these we may set aside, and act unreasonably. Let us suppose, however, that we choose to attend to the things which belong to our eternal life. We begin to consider and weigh the words of the Spirit. The message is, "*Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture; and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scripture.*" (1 Cor. xv. 2.) Is this true, we ask with all earnestness?

We examine with care every word of the declaration. Christ existed, this we admit; and that he died, we also acknowledge. In doing so we employ the same powers of mind which we use in believing that Julius Cæsar sat on the imperial throne of Rome. But when we come to the clause, "*for our sins*," mere intellect will not suffice. By our intellect we can apprehend historical facts, but their reason and their moral uses we cannot apprehend by intellect merely. Why, we are not able to apprehend what sin is by the mere understanding, and far less are we able to believe in the Saviour's death for our sins. This declaration appeals through the mere intellect to the conscience, that aspect of the pure reason which has to do with things moral. This must be satisfied before saving faith is possessed, and the whole man given up to the truth of God. And it is with a view of producing this persuasion that the Holy Ghost works, and when it is produced it is conditioned on the act of the human will, but is not its product, but is the gift of God. This "Christian faith," in the words of Henry Kingsley, "is the *yea* of the whole inner man to the divine testimony of grace and righteousness incarnate in him who *is* the truth." And this *yea*, we add, is the echo of God's *yea* concerning his Son Jesus Christ, in whom we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and all spiritual blessings. By faith in the gospel, the righteousness of God becomes man's.

Sixthly, *The righteousness of God imputed to the*

believer.—Abraham is selected by the Apostle Paul as a representative man. He is the father of the faithful, and all those who believe are his children, and are heirs of the promise. The principle on which God treated Abraham is the same principle as that on which he treats all those who believe, and this is enunciated in the words, "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*" (Rom. iv. 3.) "*David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.*" (Rom. iv. 6.) The doctrine of the imputation of righteousness is here clearly taught, and it underlies all the reasonings of the apostle throughout the epistle. The *word* may be denied, but the *thing* is ever before the mind of Paul when he writes concerning God's treatment of those who are in his Son. The word translated, "counted, and imputed," means etymologically *to think, to reckon, to count, to recount, to impute*. There seems to us to be only two distinct ways in which the word is employed by the sacred penmen, and these run into a fundamental unity in their subjective elements. They use the word in the sense (1) *of thinking and acting towards a person who is in character that which is imputed to him*, and they employ it; (2) *to signify thinking and acting towards a person, as if he was in character what is imputed to him, though he is not*. The common ground that unites both applications of the word is, of course, the thinking and acting towards the person to whom anything is imputed. For illustration of the former use of the word let us take

the reference, which is made by the Psalmist, to the judgment executed by Phinehas. He says it "*was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations.*" (Ps. cvi. 31.) The act of Phinehas was righteous and sprung from a righteous principle, and it was reckoned or imputed to him for what it really was. The latter use of the word is illustrated by such passages as the following:—"Now, Hannah, she spoke in her heart, and her lips moved. But her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought (literally reckoned) her drunken." (1 Sam. i. 13.) He thought of her and treated her as if she had been what she was not. In like manner it is said of Jesus that "*He was reckoned among the transgressors*" (Luke xxii. 37)—that is, he was thought of and treated as if he were a great sinner. Now it is not difficult to decide in which of these two senses the apostle employs the word "impute," when he says God imputes faith for righteousness. The faith of Abraham, for instance, was not righteousness, but was imputed to the patriarch for what it was not. And it was reckoned or counted to him because it terminated on God's righteousness in Christ, whose day, afar off, he saw, and was glad. Believing in the promised Saviour God treated him as if His own righteousness was possessed in its perfection by Abraham. In this gracious treatment the father of the faithful found his salvation. He was justified and had peace. So, in like manner, is it with believers in these latter days. The moment they are persuaded in their minds that the Lord is their righteousness, and that God is well pleased towards them in

the well Beloved, on the instant there is imputed to them all that Christ is and has done. They are considered not in their individual personal relations, but as "parts of the mystical body" of the Lord. What their Head deserves, they receive. What He possesses is reckoned as if it were theirs. What He has is counted to them as if it were their own. In this divine treatment there is no legal fiction, and confounding things which essentially differ. God never treats a sinner *that is only such* as if he were anything else. Nor does he treat one who believes in his Son as if he stood before him in his own self-hood. When he imputes faith for righteousness, he thinks of, and treats the believer as one "in Christ" to whom there is no condemnation; and deals with him as a branch of the living vine and not as one that is cast forth and ready to be destroyed. To deny the doctrine of imputation is to cast away the key by which access is gained to the deeper truths of revelation and of God's moral providence. To use it aright is to employ one of the most important instruments which God has placed in the hands of man for the impartation of heaven's liberty and light.

Seventhly, *The righteousness of God imparted to the believer.*—We may distinguish in thought, but it is impossible to separate the imputation and the impartation of the righteousness of God to man. Where the one is asserted the other is implied. In the order of time and nature, they are simultaneous, and are but different aspects of the one grand divine transaction. When God justifies

the sinner on the condition of his faith, he also imparts, by his Spirit, the righteousness which he imputes. It is believed in as objectively found in Christ as he is presented in the Gospel, and it is subjectively realised as received by faith. When commenting on the words, "*Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness*," Dr. Eadie remarks, "Righteousness might be taken in a broad sense as covering the whole of that rightening which a sinner needs, and through faith enjoys; that is, righteousness, both imputed and inherent,"* Dr. Owen declares that "When God doth justify the ungodly on the account of the righteousness imputed to him, he doth at the same instant, by the power of his grace, make him inherently and subjectively righteous or holy."† These statements simply re-echo the voice of the Holy Spirit. All the passages which refer to the believer's relation to the righteousness of God, and the divine action consequent on faith, teach the impartation as well as the imputation of righteousness. The outstanding thought may sometimes be the latter, but the former is never altogether wanting. This is the case even in those passages which at first sight appear to demand the exclusion of the idea of impartation altogether. One of those passages is, "*God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" (2 Cor. v. 21.) Here it is said there can be no reference to the impartation of

* "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," p. 231.

† "On Justification," p. 127.

righteousness; for, in the same way in which Christ was made sin, so believers are made righteous. And it is argued, as Jesus the sinless one did not subjectively realise sin, but that it was only imputed to him in the sense that he was treated as if he were a sinner, so the "*being made righteousness*" must refer exclusively to the external imputation of the righteousness of God, and in no degree to its impartation. This to us is altogether unsatisfactory, and is based on a wrong conception of how Christ was made sin on the one hand, and how we are in him made righteous on the other. Far from us be the thought that the spotless Lamb of God had any sin of his own. He was personally pure, holy, and innocent, and was "without sin." Still, our sins were laid upon him, he bore them in his own body up to and on the accursed tree. They were all known by his intelligence, felt by his pure conscience, and lay like a burden on his loving heart. They were so far consciously realised by the Saviour, that they filled his soul with agony and anguish, and brought him down to the dust of death. At last they broke his heart. In this relation in which human sin stood to him who knew no personal sin, there is more than simple imputation. So, in like manner, when the believer "*is made the righteousness of God in him,*" there is more than being forensically treated as Jesus deserves. There is also the implantation of the germ of that which is imputed. He is made righteous both legally and ethically. As Dr. John Forbes well observes—

“Not by *imputation* alone, then, but in reality and personal experience to the utmost extent that sin could affect the spotless Lamb of God. Christ was ‘made to be sin for us,’ and thus, on the opposite side of the parallel, Christ’s righteousness must be explained to affect all who are brought into close union with him to the utmost extent of which their natures are capable, namely, that they ‘may be made’ not putatively alone, but really and in personal experience ‘the righteousness of God in him.’”* The doctrine of this verse is the doctrine of all those other passages where it is declared that the righteousness of God is received by the faith of the sinful soul.

Eighthly, *The righteousness of God wrought out by man.*—There are frequent references in the New Testament to the practical working out of the divine principle which is received by faith. Peter, when he addressed Cornelius, said, “*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*” (Acts x. 34, 35.) The Old Testament worthies are represented as those “*who through faith subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness.*” (Heb. xi. 33.) James warns his readers to remember that “*the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*” (Jas. i. 20.) John, addressing his little children, said, “*Let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is*

* “Analytical Commentary on the Romans,” p. 141.

righteous." (1 John iii. 7.) Paul represents righteousness as a master principle to which the believer submits himself when he ceases to serve sin. "*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*" (Rom. vi. 18, 19.) Elsewhere the same divine principle is represented as the root from which spring peaceable fruits akin to the fruits of the Spirit. (Heb. xii. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 10; Phil. i. 11.) In all these passages the same common righteousness is referred to. It is the righteousness of God which is not produced by human action, but imparted by the divine Spirit to give character to the daily walk and conversation. This is not received as a dormant principle, but as one which, being acknowledged by the will, becomes part of individual human experience. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it is not that it may be entertained only as a holy sentiment. Wherever it is so treated, it soon languishes and disappears. Love is not an idler, but ever works, and is never satisfied till it reigns in action, and manifests its presence by good doing. We receive largely from the Giver of all good, not to retain, but to give out. By a law of our moral constitution, the more we give out the more we are enabled to take in; and the more we are enabled to receive the more we get. And when the soul willingly opens itself to the influences which come from above,

and yields to their restraining and constraining power, personal holiness is the result. As all sin lies in setting up the creature will in antagonism to the divine will, so all holiness consists in the voluntary submission of the creature will to the divine. This submission, though an inner act that no human eye can see, yet bears fruit that many may behold. Its fruits are peaceable and plentiful. Trueness of heart, benevolence in life, reverence in spirit, and nobility of character, are some of them. Righteousness is the master principle which is obeyed; and this covers all the relations in which man stands. For, when a man is righteous, Godward, neighbourward, and selfward, he is holy, just, and good; his thoughts, feelings, and actions, though not animated by a legal spirit, are ever in harmony with the law of God, which is holy, just, and good; conduct is the exponent of character; the divine principle is master of the human will; faith becomes the source from which works well pleasing to God spring; and holiness is pursued, without which no beatific vision will be enjoyed.

They who receive by faith the righteousness of God, and make it their own by active obedience, rise in spiritual being. They become like God in his character and nature. This is exemplified in the lives of those saints of God who were the salt of the earth, and ever bore about with them a heavenly fragrance. They were ever the first to confess that they were in themselves nothing, but in Jesus their Saviour they had all they

needed. From one degree of holiness to another they passed till they stood on heights of spirituality, which enabled them to estimate the world at its worth, and to catch ravishing glimpses of the joy and the glory which lie beyond. Their lives were solemn psalms of deepest harmony; their work, because performed in the fear of God, was worship; their homes were Bethels; and the whole earth was to them as the temple of God, in which they inquired concerning the beauty of the Lord, and his thoughts concerning them. *"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, AND IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL THEY BE EXALTED."* (Ps. lxxxviii. 15, 16.)

CHAPTER X.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE CONSIDERED.

It is very seldom that a doctrine of theology is universally received. We fear this is never the case; no matter how plain, simple, and harmonious it may appear to those who hold it, or, withal, so well grounded in Scripture and human reason, there will nevertheless be some who will honestly have difficulties in the way of receiving it as the truth of God. It is not our duty at present to examine into the causes of this diversity among intelligent Christian men, though many of them are not far to seek, but simply to note the fact. We note it because we are persuaded that not a few will have objections to some aspects of the doctrine set forth in the previous pages. To a calm consideration of these objections we now proceed. And

First, *It may be asked, how can the righteousness of God, which is a principle of the divine moral character, be imparted to moral creatures, manifested in Christ, made available to sinful man, and become his through faith?*" The question, as we have before admitted, is fair and pertinent. It goes, moreover, to the foundation of the whole subject. If principles of moral character

cannot be imparted, then all that has been considered falls to the ground; it will be mere speculation and nothing more. But that moral principles can be imparted by God to man, and by one man to his brother is, as we view it, one of the plainest doctrines of the Bible, as well as one of the commonest facts of human experience. With the express object of communicating principles of action, all the educative agencies of home, the school, the platform, the press, and the pulpit, have been instituted and kept in operation. Evil principles can be communicated. For example, a man of bad principles in a workshop, where a number of young men with susceptible minds are employed, is dangerous. He may do damage to their morals, and his influence will act like the fatal infection of a moral fever. And hence mothers and fathers who are worthy of the name, will do all that they can to prevent their children from imbibing his principles, and becoming like to him in character.

What is true of sinful principles is equally true of good principles. They, too, may be imparted and received. The whole Christian Church was instituted by its divine founder that all those to whom His words are spirit and life, should, by preaching, impart them to others. Christianity is a propagandist system, and is designed to revolutionise not the opinions so much as the ideas and motives of men. Gospel preachers, who are not man-made but God-furnished, will be embodiments of its principles; and their work is to instil them into the souls of those who have them not. These

principles in their origin and nature are divine; they are to be found in all their perfection only in the Holy One, and by him they are vouchsafed to all in order to be received. In this way the sinful children of Adam may become God-like. They may be so exalted in spiritual experience that the joy, the peace, and the very life of God may be theirs. We are chastened, says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "*that we might be partakers of His holiness.*" (Heb. xii. 10.) Jesus declares that the glory which the Father gave to him he had given to those who trusted in him. (John xvii. 22.) A higher position than even this is possible to the human soul through faith. For not only may the sinner come to possess the joy, the peace, the holiness, the glory, and life of God, but he may also become a partaker of the divine nature. "*There are given unto us,*" says Peter, "*exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might become partakers of the divine nature.*" (2 Peter i. 4.) Wonderful announcement, and gracious as it is wonderful. It covers our whole doctrine. "This," says Luther, "is such a saying, that its like is not to be found either in the New or Old Testament,—although to unbelievers it is a light thing that we should have communion with the divine nature itself. What, however, is the nature of God? It is eternal truth, righteousness, wisdom, eternal life, peace, joy, and pleasure, and whatsoever we can call good. He therefore who is made a partaker of the divine nature has the whole of this falling to his lot; that he lives eternally, and has everlasting

peace, happiness, and joy; and is clean, pure, just, and all-powerful against the devil, sin, and death." These words of Luther do but express the idea to which Paul gave utterance, when he said, that "*the new man is after God created in righteousness and true holiness.*" (Eph. ii. 24.) Indeed, all those parts of the sacred word which bring out the close relation in which the believer stands to Christ, and Christ to the believer, imply or teach the same grand reality. They would be emptied of all meaning if it were not true that the principles of the divine moral character may be received by moral creatures. Growth, then, towards God is within our reach; and assimilation to the image of him whose we are is no chimera.

Secondly, *It may be objected that, according to what has been advanced, the ground of the sinner's justification is in himself; whereas, in the Bible, it is represented as being in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.* This objection has force, it is at once granted, when it is urged against some who contend for the impartation of the righteousness of God, but it has none when brought to bear upon the doctrine as stated and defined by us. When we take the Bible as our guide, there cannot be the least hesitation as to the ground of the sinner's acceptance with God. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says, we are "*chosen in him,*" "*predestinated by Jesus Christ,*" "*accepted in the beloved,*" "*in whom we have redemption,*" "*in whom we have obtained an inheritance.*" These and kindred deliverances utter no uncertain

sound as to the ground of our standing in the heavenly family. They point out unmistakably that it is not found in ourselves, nor our works, nor in what we possess, but in Jesus the Saviour, and in him alone. A contrary doctrine is that of the Roman Catholic Church. The Council of Trent decreed that "If any one shall say that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or by the sole remission of sin to the exclusion of that grace and charity which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and which inheres in them, or shall say that the grace whereby we are justified is merely and only the favour of God; let him be accursed." But in so decreeing, the members of this celebrated council showed how far they had departed from the mind of the Spirit, and misunderstood what are the essentials of saving truth. They virtually make man so far his own saviour, and find in his own possession that, in virtue of which, when taken along with the righteousness of Christ, constitutes the ground of his own salvation. In this way they confound things which differ, and altogether fail to distinguish between the righteousness of Christ which justifies, and that which the believer receives. The ground of human justification is, and must be, a perfect righteousness. The righteous and perfect Jehovah can approve of and reward nothing else. This no man as a sinner ever did or ever will possess, and the same may be said of man as a saint. This alone is found in Jesus Christ, the Righteous, in whom God is

well-pleased. He is our "*Advocate with the Father, and the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" (1 John ii. 2.) In Him alone God is satisfied, and in his righteousness He finds the sole ground on account of which he justifies the ungodly.

Thirdly, *It may be objected that the doctrine advocated makes justification partly ethical, whereas in Scripture it is always represented as simply forensic.* Here also we admit that there are many who maintain that there is an ethical element in justification, who think somewhat in harmony with the general scope of the views of divine truth we have advanced. With their doctrine of justification, however, we do not agree. They seem to us to misapprehend the import of the word, and to misunderstand the place which justification occupies in the system of Christian truth, as well as some of the most explicit declarations of the Scriptures. Man is viewed by God as guilty, and consequently his relations to law are far from being satisfactory. He is condemned, and over him the wrath of God abides. Before he can be delivered from the moral consequences of transgression he must first be delivered from penalty. The wrath must be removed before light and love can flow into the soul. This is accomplished when God, on the ground of the righteousness in Jesus, *makes the believing sinner out to be righteous*, and this is his justification. There is no ethical element imparted by the act of justification. The act is forensic throughout.

The reason of it, as we have seen, is not in the person who receives the blessing, but wholly in Christ the Saviour. For his sake the ungodly who believe are made out to be righteous, and treated as if they had not sinned. They are not made holy by being justified, and there is nothing in the act of justification but the pardon of their sin and the acceptance of their persons.

While it is of importance to maintain that justification is forensic and external, it is, at the same time, not to be forgotten that the condition of justification is partly ethical. That which some Protestant writers, such as the Rev. Joseph T. Goodsir, say is effected by the act of justification, is, according to our thinking, secured by the condition on which God has been pleased to suspend the making the believer out to be righteous. The condition is faith in the Gospel which reveals the righteousness of God, and this faith is not legal, but spiritual—not intellectual simply, but moral as well. In the bosom of this ethical condition the germ of righteousness is found, which secures sanctification. As the oak is in the acorn and the fruit is in the seed, so is the righteousness in the faith which makes Christ its own. "I do not feel," says Dr. McLeod Campbell, "that I can more pointedly express Luther's conception of faith than in saying that it lifts us into Christ, and makes us one with him, both in our own consciousness and in God's judgment of us." Faith, therefore, is the condition of both justification and sanctification, both legal and moral rectification.

Finally, *it may be objected that, according to the doctrine advanced, the sinner must be regenerated or made righteous before he believes.*" This is by no means a valid objection against the doctrine we have expounded. We have not the slightest sympathy with the idea that a soul must be regenerated before faith. The doctrine of the Bible and sound Philosophy is, "*Hear and your soul shall live.*" Life is not before faith, nor is righteousness imparted prior to the reception of the Gospel. How then, it may be asked, can you consistently hold that a man must be made good in order to doing good, and that the possession of righteousness is necessary to a righteous act? We reply that, as laid down in a previous chapter, faith is the gift of God, and is received not before nor after righteousness, but contemporaneously. In other words, exercising faith and receiving righteousness are but two sides of the one fact of experience. "*My words,*" says Jesus, "*they are spirit and they are life.*" Those who hear what the Spirit says, and mix the word heard with faith in the hearing thereof, receive the elements of moral character, which will enable them to glorify their God, honour their Saviour, and be a power in the universe for good. Life shall be theirs through and in their faith, and growth, loveliness, and fruitfulness, shall spring therefrom.

THE END.

